

Aleksandra Gluba

Loshn Under Surveillance: Folks-Shtime **in 1968–1978**

And so the history goes on.
Neither you nor I will write its end.
Even if rivers of ink were to flow,
We would find no room for it.
So many unspoken words
So many unshed tears –
That day
Has not yet perished in the abyss of time –
Paralyzed
It lives in the world.

Elye Rayzman, 1967

(*Nie nad rzekami Babilonu: Antologia poezji jidysz w powojennej Polsce* [Not by the Rivers of Babylon: Anthology of Yiddish Poetry in Postwar Poland]; Rajzman, 2012, pp. 154–155)¹

The readers of the periodical *Folks-Shtime* [Voice of the People] were well acquainted with the poetry of the Yiddish poet Elye Rayzman (Eliasz Rajzman). A sociocultural activist and advocate for the working class, Rayzman was born in Volhynia, settling in Szczecin after the war. The periodical continued to publish Rayzman's poems also after

¹ Translated into English by Grupa Mowa from the Polish translation from Yiddish by M. Ruta.

his death in the first quarter of 1975. I begin my reflections with an extensive quotation from a piece written in 1967, a year that, in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, saw the emergence of an antisemitic campaign, which culminated in the Polish 1968 political crisis. In many aspects, Rayzman was a representative of a diverse and simultaneously fascinating and creative circle of Yiddish writers, who decided to settle and remain in Poland after the chaos of war. My deliberations feature fragments of selected literary works (all from *Folks-Shtime*, apart from the introductory quote), which serve to safeguard the assumed strategy of both reading and interpreting the content of this Jewish newspaper in Poland. Literature and art, with their capacity for artistic expression and communication through symbols, various meanings, and metaphors, hold a unique potential to develop the periodical's "second layer." This dimension not only fosters awareness and appreciation of key figures in Jewish culture but also contributes to the shaping of identity.

The starting point for this article is the reflection that throughout the entire existence of *Folks-Shtime* (published between 1946 and 1991), the Yiddish language played a significant role within the publication not only as a carrier of propaganda content but above all as a value in itself – an important element of identity and an unquestionable link to the tradition, culture, and legacy of the Polish Jews, which faced eradication as a result of the antisemitic campaign of 1968.

Article objectives

The article aims to present and analyze selected fragments of the *Folks-Shtime* periodical published during the first decade after the events of the Polish 1968 political crisis. However, my objective is not to produce a strictly historical or cross-sectional text, while many of the themes addressed and alluded to merit deeper investigation and detailed analysis. In the article, I include direct references to existing and vital studies in historiography, literary studies, and press studies by authors such as Grzegorz Berendt (2012, 2014), Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikov (2008b), and Magdalena Ruta (2017).

The antisemitic campaign of 1968 was a catalyst for various changes and processes that shaped the development of two distinct discourses within the publication: the official and the unofficial. The latter dimension, which I explore in this article, is less obvious, less legible, and requires the application of a critical and interpretive approach that considers the cultural contexts embedded within the periodical. Consequently, it extends beyond

the boundaries of conventional historiography. Using the competencies acquired from literary studies and Yiddish studies, I propose a way of analyzing the content of *Folks-Shtime* which is alternative to the solutions used to date. My intention is to distinguish the individual and collective subjectivity of the antisemitic campaign's victims, who included both the newspaper's readers and its creators.

What draws my attention in this periodical toeing the party line are elements that allow us to view it as a source documenting the scale of violence and repression, which the readers can still detect despite the fact that the content was subject to censorship. I believe that the magazine's content also testifies to bold attempts to loosen the shackles of an imposed agenda.

The article's principal research criterion and the category structuring the argument is the Yiddish *loshn* (language), which for a long time (from the newspaper's establishment in 1946 until the end of September 1969) was the only language in which *Folks-Shtime* was published. The Yiddish language conveys meaning not only on historical and cultural levels but, most importantly, on an emotional one. By adopting this perspective, I seek to draw attention to the subjectivity of those who acted as the ultimate custodians of the linguistic heritage of Polish Jews in defiance of the direct threats to this heritage.

In support of my thesis, I will use a quotation from an article by August Grabski and Martyna Rusiniak:

We should conclude by saying that the Jewish faction of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), the Polish United Workers' Party's (PZPR) representation in the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (CKŻP), and later the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (TSKŻ) all played a decisive role in the struggle for the preservation and propagation of culture linked to the Jewish language in postwar Poland after it had been obliterated by the tragedy of the Holocaust. Regrettably, as a result of assimilation processes, Zionist propaganda, and emigration from Poland, especially the 1968 exodus, these efforts ultimately proved futile. Nevertheless, if some manifestations of Jewish culture in the most important language of Polish Jewry did indeed survive until the end of the twentieth century to become the basis for the current revival of interest in Yiddish, it was thanks to Jewish communists. (Grabski & Rusiniak, 2008, p. 64)

A sense of duty, if not a sense of mission, stemmed from personal experiences (surviving the Holocaust, the loss of loved ones during the war, but also the gradual shrinking of the community as a result of successive emigrations and postwar antisemitism), which

undoubtedly shaped the commitment to the preservation of the language–symbol (the language of the annihilated family home referred to as *mame-loshn* or the mother tongue). Jewish communists centered around institutions such as the Central Committee of Jews in Poland and later the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (TSKŻ, with *Folks-Shtime* as its official organ from 1956 onward), who placed their trust in the system they actively created (Schatz, 2008, pp. 27–49) and in egalitarian and equalitarian ideals, were unable to foresee that there would come a moment in the postwar history of Polish Jews when the means of their daily communication, academic work, and artistic expression would be endangered. After the war, Yiddish writers published many works of journalistic, academic, and artistic character, as Aron Vergelis related in a formal tone in 1965 in the pages of the Yiddish propaganda magazine *Sovetish Heymland* [Soviet Homeland], published in Moscow:

After the war, Yiddish literature in Poland returned home. Its creators are scarce, but it already has poetry by [David] Sfard, [Yankev] Zonshayn, [Paltiel] Tsibulski, [Moyshe] Shklar, and [Elye] Rayzman, prose by Lili Berger, Kalman Segal, and Shloyme Strauss-Marko, books on social and political topics in which Ber Mark, Hersh Smolar, and Michał Mirski discuss recent events, and heartfelt essays by Shloyme Belis. (Estraiikh, 2008, p. 225)

The threat to language in the context of the events of the Polish 1968 political crisis and its aftermath sheds new light and broadens the outlook on *Folks-Shtime*. I view it as more than just a magazine controlled by the state apparatus. As Berendt highlights, dedicated and prominent activists linked to TSKŻ and ZRWM (Religious Union of Judaism) served *Folks-Shtime* by acting as “spokesmen for People’s Poland” (Berendt, 2014, p. 344) and working for an institutionally manipulated “community for show” (Berendt, 2014, pp. 360–361). It was also a magazine implementing a number of unofficial missions in the service of – to use an extended paraphrase of the phrase above – a community subjected to a number of trials. Among the various challenges, I will mention as vital the maintenance and nurturing of the Yiddish press tradition in Poland under difficult political conditions by means of the only Jewish press title in existence in the Polish People’s Republic. Therefore, we should draw attention to the tasks that (in addition to the official requirements of the journal’s editors) the periodical implemented in the first decade after the antisemitic campaign of 1968. Moreover, I emphasize the continuity of certain phenomena (also in the broader context of the Yiddish press phenomenon) so that, by focusing on just a section of *Folks-Shtime*’s history, we can avoid the false assumption that its certain features characterize only this title and only in the era after the Polish 1968 political crisis.

While working on the material, which comprised the issues published in 1968–1978, my attention was drawn to the richness of the contexts, the role of metaphors, intertextual references, symbolism, and therefore non-literalism, which allowed the safe concealment of the content relevant from the point of view of the repressed minority. Employing Aesopian language is not an entirely new and unprecedented solution; on the contrary, as Nalewajko-Kulikov points out, it is a historical tradition of the diasporic Jewish press, representing the so-called minority media (Mieczkowski, 2012, p. 119), subject to strict control, and created in politically unfavorable conditions:

German researcher Susanne Marten-Finnis lists the following characteristics of the Jewish press in the diaspora and consequently also in the Russian Empire: educational aspirations, the orientation function (*Wegweiserfunktion*), ephemerality, multilingualism, and *phraseological specificity* (i.e. *Aesopian language used to confuse the censors*). (Nalewajko-Kulikov, 2012, pp. 7–9, emphasis by AG)

Literature, which was an inseparable component of the periodical (being at the same time an inseparable element of the tradition of the Jewish press in Poland) from its early years until its closure in 1991, played a significant role in this type of activity. Moyshe Shklar, a former contributor to the periodical, encourages this particular strategy of reading or rather “interpreting” *Folks-Shtime*. In his memoir, *Gazeta “Folks-Sztyme” (1948–1968) – refleksje osobiste* [The *Folks-Shtime* Newspaper (1948–1968): Personal Reflections], Shklar describes the atmosphere of fear prevailing during the most intensive period of the 1968 “collapse” not only in the editorial office of the paper but also across the entire Jewish community in Poland. By referring to the well-established topos of the Wandering Jew, Shklar reconstructs the symbolic way in which *Folks-Shtime* expressed solidarity with all the victims of the pogrom of Polish Jews which took place at the end of the 1960s.

The Jewish community in Poland responded to these events in a definitive manner – with the third mass emigration. On April 19, 1968, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, *Folks-Shtime* published on its front page a famous poem by the Jewish folk poet from Krakow, Mordekhay Gebirtig, entitled “Our Town Is Burning” (“Undzer shtetl brent”). Most of *Folks-Shtime*’s employees, alongside the magazine’s editor-in-chief, reached for their walking canes. (Szklar, 2008, p. 186)

History came full circle. The publication of Gebirtig’s seminal piece, written in 1936 on the news of the bloody Przytyk riots, was a clear and comprehensible gesture of unity and empathy with all the victims of the antisemitic campaign.

Tsaytungen, Tsaytungen, Tsaytung... **[Newspapers, newspapers, newspaper...]**

Folks-Shtime was the last of an impressive number of Yiddish press titles that were first published (not without formal obstacles) in the Polish lands in the nineteenth century, starting with the Warsaw periodical *Varshoyer Yidishe Tsaytung* [Warsaw Jewish Newspaper] of 1867–1868 (Nalewajko-Kulikov, 2012, p. 13). A real boom occurred in the interwar period:

In 1928, Poland saw as much as 45% of the world's Yiddish press production, which accounted for 186 titles, including 23 dailies, one semi-weekly, 85 weeklies, 18 biweeklies, 43 monthlies, and 16 ephemeral magazines or periodicals of undetermined publication frequency. (Nalewajko-Kulikov, 2012, p. 13)

The consequences of the Holocaust made the reconstruction of such a thriving and diverse network of periodicals impossible. Between 1944 and 1950, during the active period of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, discussions of Jewish autonomy accompanied by a vibrant revival of social and cultural life sparked hope for the revival of Jewish life in Poland. In her book *Without Jews? Yiddish Literature in the People's Republic of Poland on the Holocaust, Poland and Communism*, Magdalena Ruta describes this revival, which subsequently influenced specific initiatives and the creation of numerous thriving Jewish institutions:

In the initial years following liberation, there was relative political freedom across Poland, which also extended to the Jewish population. Many institutions were founded in this period that played a major role in the revival of Jewish social and cultural life: the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (CKŻP, Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce), the Jewish Historical Commission (ŻKH, Żydowska Komisja Historyczna), the theatres in Wrocław and Łódź, the Union of Jewish Writers, Journalists and Artists (Związek Literatów, Dziennikarzy i Artystów Żydowskich), the Jewish Society for the Promotion of the Fine Arts (Żydowskie Towarzystwo Krzewienia Sztuk Pięknych), and others. [...] In centres of Jewish life in Lower Silesia (where the main town was Wrocław), Łódź and Szczecin, and in time also in Warsaw, community centres and clubs were opened, and choirs, theatre troupes, libraries, and reading rooms operated. (Ruta, 2017, pp. 12–13)

This particular period also influenced and stimulated the revival of the Jewish publishing market in Poland:

Initially, the foremost publishing centre was Łódź, but from the end of the 1940s it was Warsaw. [...] This brief period up to the end of the 1940s was the time of greatest diversity in the literary world, for it was then that at least 70 surviving writers, opinion journalists and reporters writing in Yiddish passed through Poland. (Ruta, 2017, p. 13)

However, after a period of relative freedom came the twilight of Jewish national and cultural autonomy (Nowak-Małolepsza & Włodarczyk, 2010, p. 210). Writing about its course and consequences, Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikov additionally reconstructs the circumstances of *Folks-Shtime*'s creation. The researcher embeds them in the broader context of the postwar reality of Jewish life in Poland, which was exposed to dynamic changes and subordinated to political doctrine:

The end of the era of relative pluralism in the so-called Jewish street in 1949–1950 meant the liquidation of most of the existing Jewish political parties (the banning of the Zionist parties and the dissolution of the Bund, with some members joining the Polish United Workers' Party) and a radical change in the situation of the Jewish press. Between 1944 and 1950, there were as many as 78 Jewish periodicals, including 37 newspapers. After 1952, the extensive press market comprising periodicals published in the Yiddish, Polish, and Hebrew languages dwindled to merely three titles: the literary monthly *Yidishe Shriftn*, the scholarly periodical *Bleter far Geshikhte* of the Jewish Historical Institute, and *Folks-Shtime* – the organ of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) published four times a week in Yiddish. *Folks-Shtime*'s first issue was published in Łódź on February 22, 1946, as a single day's newspaper with the secondary title *P.P.R. ishe Tsaytskrift* (PPR Newspaper) and edited by Regina (Rywa) Wojskowska. For several years after the war, the periodical had a varying publication frequency (it began as a monthly and later transformed into a weekly) and different editors. In 1950, after merging with *Dos Naye Lebn*, it became the only Yiddish newspaper not only in Poland but also (alongside Birobidzhaner Shtern) in the entire Eastern Bloc. (Nalewajko-Kulikov, 2008b, p. 277, emphasis by AG)

In the context of the phenomenon of the communist Yiddish press, which was published not only in the Soviet Union but also in the West, we should mention the observation of Nalewajko-Kulikov. It refers to the spelling rules used in the periodical before the Polish Thaw of 1956 – *Folks-Shtime* did not enforce the so-called Soviet Yiddish orthography, which secularized the spelling of vocabulary of biblical etymology, originating from *loshn-koydesh* (liturgical language). The researcher writes: "the Jewish community, as the only one among the national minorities living in the Polish People's Republic, published a newspaper in its own language prior to 1956,

all the while preserving the traditional Yiddish orthography” (Nalewajko-Kulikov, 2008b, p. 277). In this context, August Grabski and Martyna Rusiniak also draw attention to the instrumentalization of Yiddish in *Folks-Shtime*, which was the organ of the Jewish section of the PPR at the time:

The fundamental axis of the activities of the Jewish faction of the PPR was the development of Jewish culture, whose language among the masses of workers and petty bourgeoisie was, of course, Yiddish. The Hebrew language presented associations, also in the opinion of the Yevseksiya and the Communist Party of Poland, with the culture of the upper classes, as well as religious culture and the nationalist movement (Zionism). However, the faction had no intention of destroying it by means of administrative solutions, as was the case in the USSR. Moreover, in its anti-Hebraism, it did not intend to adopt the Soviet orthographic reform of the Jewish language, which involved adopting phonetic notation and abandoning the traditional Hebrew spelling of several percent of the vocabulary. (Grabski & Rusiniak, 2008, p. 55)

This crucial feature invites additional reflection on how this state of affairs was maintained – was the use of traditional orthography not a form of an achieved compromise between representatives of left-wing authors and readers of the periodical with differing political and ideological views? The abrupt cut which almost completely put an end to the postwar multilingual Jewish press in Poland in the early 1950s left the Jewish community without access to an information exchange platform. Regardless of the indisputable propaganda function of the periodical, such platforms were crucial to the integration and education of the Jewish community during the ongoing processes of migrating and settling in Poland, searching for loved ones or, more broadly, maintaining contact with the international diaspora. In circumstances where the existence of other minority media independent from the state was legally unattainable, the preservation of traditional spelling might have constituted, in the period before the Polish Thaw, an attempt to loosen the existing restrictions (which genuinely handicapped the functioning of the periodical) and, through such a form of inclusiveness, enhance its attractiveness in the eyes of as many readers as possible. Therefore, the objective of such activities, apart from the programmed indoctrination, could also have been the desire and mission to integrate the Polish Jewish diaspora across various divides, both political and generational. The editorial team of *Folks-Shtime* faced a similar challenge after the Polish 1968 political crisis, during a period of yet another suppression of Jewish life in Poland, when Yiddish transformed from a living language to an almost extinct language in Poland and *Folks-Shtime* acquired a special status.

“Then it was March 1968”²

Who am I?
A shepherd of wolf packs
on paths of final days
in a faraway land
just after the Flood.

Elye Rayzman

(“Glob ziemski” [The Globe],
Folks-Shtime – hereinafter
F-Sh, January 17, 1976, p. 10)³

The consequences of the antisemitic campaign left a visible imprint on the management of the press organ of the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland, whose existence was directly threatened at the time. Contributing factors included the sudden narrowing of the circle of contributors and readers as a result of redundancies and emigration and the censors’ restrictive stipulations, which in practice prevented the publication of the periodical in its previous frequency of four times a week. The authorities provided the Jewish publishers with a set of draconian requirements, which Hans-Christian Dahlmann describes in the broader context of the TSKŻ’s dramatic situation:

On March 31, the authorities dismissed Grzegorz Smolar, *Folks-Shtime*’s editor-in-chief, and at around the same time excluded him from the party together with seven other TSKŻ activists. The campaign brought the TSKŻ to the brink of collapse. Eventually, Leopold Trepper stepped down as chairman in April. In July 1968, he wrote to Gomułka that the association was ailing and that the campaign had deeply disturbed its members and activists. *He highlighted the fact that the censor’s demand to translate into Polish all the texts before their submission for publication had, in reality, paralyzed the publication of periodicals in the Jewish language.* He further complained about the dismantling of the Jewish Historical Institute and the decline of the Jewish Theater and Jewish education.

The literary magazine *Yidishe Shriftn* ceased publication in 1968 because its editor-in-chief Sfard, whom the authorities also expelled from the party, intended to emigrate from Poland. *The circulation of Folks-Shtime decreased from 4,000 copies in the first*

² Sobelman (2008, p. 200).

³ Translated into English by Grupa Mowa from the Polish translation from Yiddish by K. Suchodolska.

quarter of 1968 to 2,300 copies in the fourth quarter. The reason for this was that many readers felt that the TSKŻ, which was under considerable pressure, did not represent their interests. Whatever the facts were, in April 1969 a Security Service informant stated that this was the reason why almost everyone in the TSKŻ stopped paying their membership fees. (Dahlmann, 2018, p. 249, emphasis by AG)

These activities resulted in the transformation of *Folks-Shtime* from a daily to a weekly, with the first issue published on September 21, 1968. The first page of the issue preceding this change, which was published on September 14, featured the following message:⁴

To All *Folks-Shtime* Subscribers and Readers

Starting this Saturday, September 21, 1968, we will publish *Folks-Shtime* as a weekly. Each issue will comprise twelve pages and cost 1.50 zlotys.

Once a month, *Folks-Shtime* will include the eight-page-long Polish supplement *Nasz Głos* [Our Voice]. In this case, the newspaper will cost 2.50 zlotys per issue.

As usual, it will be possible to subscribe to *Folks-Shtime* at Ruch kiosks, until the tenth day of the last month in a quarter.

The subscription cost for a quarter amounts to 22.50 zlotys in Poland and 31.50 zlotys abroad. (*F-Sh*, September 14, 1968; "Tsu ale abonentn un leyener fun der «Folks-Shtime»", 1968, p. 1)

On the same page, an additional short message appeared in the column – probably to draw the reader's attention to this significant change: "The next *Folks-Shtime* issue will be published as a weekly on Saturday, September 21, 1968" (*F-Sh*, September 14, 1968, p. 1).

Besides the closing of the *Yidishe Shriftn* [Yiddish Writings] literary monthly active since 1946 that Dahlmann mentions in his book, Yidish Bukh, the highly productive publishing house (Nalewajko-Kulikov, 2008a, p. 129) and one of the global leaders in the number of publications, ceased operations as well. Notably, David Sfard was Yidish Bukh's literary director. Furthermore, in August 1969, the Polish supplement to *Folks-Shtime* for young readers, *Nasz Głos*, also disappeared.

Already practically non-existent and ephemeral, almost the entire Jewish writing market vanished in Poland. The regulation that required magazine editors to provide translated texts to censors reveals not only a deliberate and intentional effort to eliminate numerous Jewish publications but also the discomfort and unease that the existence of Yiddish press and literature could provoke in the apparatus of state power. In what we can call a vivid tradition of antisemitic thinking, the authorities saw the language's potential – indiscernible to those

⁴ Quotations from *F-Sh* translated into English by Grupa Mowa from the Polish translations from Yiddish by A. Gluba.

outside the Jewish community – to conceal content that seemed undesirable from the decision-makers' perspective. This content included the "Jewish viewpoint," which Dahlmann discusses in the broader context of other Jewish institutions in the Polish People's Republic:

Unlike the Jewish Theater, the Jewish Historical Institute was *a thorn in the authorities' side* because its publications addressed Polish–Jewish relations during the Second World War. *The same applies, though to a lesser extent, to the TSKŻ, which could present a Jewish viewpoint in its press organ, Folks-Shtime.* We can assume that attacks on the Jewish Theater did not materialize not only due to Ida Kamińska's reputation but also because *the Theater posed less of a threat to nationalist circles within the party.* (Dahlmann, 2018, p. 256, emphasis by AG)

Between March 27 and April 30, *Folks-Shtime* began reporting on dismissals and resignations of prominent individuals holding prestigious positions, all involving people working in Warsaw. Almost all these reports appeared as brief press releases of the Polish Press Agency (PAP, Polska Agencja Prasowa) in the lower corners of the newspaper's front pages, except for a longer article of April 10 discussing the removal of Edward Ochab (*F-Sh*, April 10, 1968; "Plenare sesye fun seym" [Sejm's Plenary Session], 1968, p. 1). The reports stated the following:

March 27, 1968, p. 1:

Professor Żółkiewski Removed from Position

Warsaw (PAP): The Prime Minister removed Professor Stefan Żółkiewski from the position of secretary of the First Faculty of Social Sciences at the Polish Academy of Sciences. ("Prof. dr Zshulkevski opgerufn fun zayn amt," 1968, p. 1)

Professors Dismissed from the University of Warsaw

Warsaw (PAP): On the twenty-fifth day of this month, the following professors were dismissed from their positions at the University of Warsaw: Professor Bronisław Baczko, Professor Leszek Kołakowski, and Professor Stefan Morawski from the Faculty of Philosophy, Zygmunt Bauman and Maria Hirszowicz, assistant professors from the same faculty, and Professor Włodzimierz Brus from the Faculty of Political Economy. ("Bafreyt fun der arbet profesorn fun Warshever Universitet," 1968, p. 1)

April 6, 1968, p. 1:

D. Kac and W. Bilig Removed from Their Offices

The Prime Minister dismissed D. Kac, the president for state reserves, from office. The Prime Minister also removed W. Bilig from the position of government representative for the use of atomic energy. ("D. Katz un W. Bilig bafreyt fun zeyere amtn," 1968, p. 1)

April 9, 1968, p. 1:

Rector and Prorector of the Film and Theater School Dismissed

The Minister of Culture and Art dismissed Professor Jerzy Toeplitz, the rector of the Polish National Film and Theater School, and Assistant Professor Roman Wajdowicz, the prorector of this school. ("Rektor un prorektor fun Teater- un Film-Hoykhshul bafreyt fun zeyere amtn," 1968, p. 1)

April 30, 1968, p. 1:

Professor Katz-Suchy Retired

Pursuant to Article 114, paragraphs 2 and 3 of January 23 of this year, the Minister of Education and Schools of Academic Rank retired Professor J. Katz-Suchy, the chairman of the Department of the History of Diplomacy and International Relations at the University of Warsaw. ("Prof. Katz-Suchi oyf emeritur," 1968, p. 1)

The anti-Zionist propaganda imposed on the editorial team took on a personal dimension through specific names and faces. In the case of the medium targeting the Jewish working-class minority, these faces belonged to intellectuals blamed for destabilizing the country. In the spirit of "class struggle," the newspaper emphasized the opposition between Warsaw intellectual elites and the (often non-Warsaw-based) proletariat. At the same time, major changes resulting from the events of the Polish 1968 political crisis occurred in the publication's structure and subjects. The newspaper shrank and so did Jewish life in Poland, which manifested in the disappearance of important regular columns providing information about the activities of TSKŻ's specific branches. At the end of April 1968, "Khronik fun Yidishn Kultur-Gezelshaftlekhn Leb'n" [The Chronicle of Jewish Sociocultural Life] vanished. In July, the frequency of "In di Yidishe Folks-Klubn" [In Jewish Folk Clubs] began to decrease. During this period, *Folks-Shtime* featured numerous reports concerning protests in various workplaces, including Jewish cooperatives: "Bumet," "Ghetto Heroes," "Gershon Dua-Bogen," and "Revival". The newspaper presented the protests in a broader context of international student and worker strikes against the Vietnam War, German neo-Nazism, and racism and neo-Nazism; the reports in question were laced with anti-Western propaganda. In this respect, we cannot ignore the fact that *Folks-Shtime* continued to circulate abroad. The state-controlled narrative conveyed an unequivocal message: conditions were bad everywhere, but worst in the West, which should bear full responsibility for destabilizing the Eastern Bloc. In this light, one could interpret emigration as disloyalty and agreement with values contrary to communist ideology. In turn, this could trigger feelings of isolation and separation from the international diaspora

among Polish Jews. Locally, similar measures to isolate the community seemed evident. Publications about Jewish life in Poland remained limited to the activities of the TSKŻ and other state-controlled institutions like the Jewish Historical Institute. This created the newspaper's official, first "layer." An article of August 24, 1968, entitled "1968 – yor fun mentshnrekht" [1968 – The Year of Human Rights] (*F-Sh*, August 24, 1968; "1968 – yor fun mentshnrekht," 1968, p. 6), strikingly illustrates *Folks-Shtime*'s entanglement. Yet, what lay beneath the surface?

The "Jewish viewpoint" described by Dahlmann could not be expressed openly in this situation. The newspaper did not inform its readers even about changes in positions of its editor-in-chief (Hersh Smolar) or TSKŻ's chairman (Leopold Trepper). However, efforts were made to address the escalating wave of antisemitic sentiment, which directly affected the weekly's staff. *Folks-Shtime* responded to the crisis gripping the community – a crisis which, as widely known, had a profound psychological impact on its victims, reviving traumas and drawing stark parallels to personal and collective experiences from the Holocaust. The editorial team expressed its resistance in the use of metaphor to convey emotionally charged messages. We can understand these messages as a form of support and encouragement to scattered individuals across the country during a time when antisemitic rhetoric intensified, focusing on Jewish surnames and turning workplaces into arenas of persecution. To illustrate this strategy of writing/surviving, I will draw on examples of article headlines published between May and the end of September 1968, particularly from sections regarding legal, health, and educational advice. I choose headlines deliberately due to their unique graphic distinction from other published content. I also see them as a method of establishing direct communication with people burdened by various concerns:

May 29, 1968, p. 4:

"The Lawyer Answers": About the Child's Surname ("Der yurist entfert: Vegn familienomen fun kind," 1968, p. 4)

June 11, 1968, p. 3:

Smile ("Tu a shmeykhl," 1968, p. 3)

June 18, 1968, p. 4:

On Science: How to Save Your Nerves from Chaos ("Oyf visnshaftlekhe temes: Rateven di nervn funem tuml," 1968, p. 4)

June 27, 1968, p. 3:

Our Children – Good Respite ("Undzere kinder – a gutn opru," 1968, p. 3)

July 16, 1968, p. 4:

Between Us Neighbours ("Tsvishn undz – shkheynim," 1968, p. 4)

September 28, 1968, p. 10:

"The Lawyer Answers": When Can the Employer Fire the Employee? ("Der yurist entfert: Ven kon men bafrayen fun der arbet," 1968, p. 10)

Moreover, during that time, Kalman Segal, a poet, worked as a columnist in *Folks-Shtime*. In the summer, he published the following texts:

July 13, 1968, p. 3:

Kleyner felieton: Vegn undzere gefiln [Small Column: About Our Feelings] (Segal, 1968a, p. 3)

August 1, 1968, p. 3:

Kleyner felieton: Kegn eynzamkeyt [Small Column: Against Loneliness] (Segal, 1968b, p. 3)

When the wave of mass emigration of Polish Jews began, the newspaper reported on their chosen destinations and the increased activity of Jewish communities abroad, especially in Sweden and Denmark. On April 30, 1968, the "Yidishe naves" [Jewish News] column featured a message from Stockholm: "*Der Fidler oyfn dakh* in tsvey shvedishe teaters" [*Fiddler on the Roof* in Two Swedish Theaters] (*F-Sh*, April 30, 1968; "«Der fidler oyfn dakh» in tsvey shvedishe teaters," 1968, p. 1). On June 12, an article entitled "Undzer nisht vayter shokhn – Denemark" [Our Close Neighbor – Denmark] appeared in the newspaper (*F-Sh*, June 12, 1968; "Undzer nisht vayter shokhn – Denemark," 1968, p. 5), followed by another article published in "Yidishe naves" on August 6: "Yidisher film in der shvedisher telewizye" [A Jewish Film on Swedish Television] (*F-Sh*, August 6, 1968; "Yidisher film in der shvedisher televizye," 1968, p. 1).

On August 8, 1968, an unsigned opinion column was published: "Puste khaloymes" [Empty Dreams] (*F-Sh*, August 8, 1968; "Puste khaloymes," 1968, p. 3). Its bitter tone reflected Jewish communists' unfulfilled, unattainable dreams of a Poland free from antisemitism and inequality:

For Jewish communists active in the TSKŻ, the antisemitic campaign meant a personal defeat. They had helped build the Polish People's Republic, always advocated for Jews to stay in the country, and opposed Zionism in its true sense. In 1969, Grzegorz Smolar expressed his despair in a letter to Gomułka. He emphasized that he had spent over half a century in the labor movement and served as *Folks-Shtime's* editor-in-chief for twenty years. (Dahlmann, 2018, pp. 249–250)

An analysis of texts published during the post-March “collapse” suggests the existence of two distinct *Folks-Shtime* newspapers, as it were. First, in the literal sense – *Folks-Shtime* split due to the direct impact of the antisemitic campaign, which manifested in the above-mentioned transition from a daily to a weekly format on September 21, 1968. The campaign caused the publication of the newspaper’s last fully Yiddish issue on September 27, 1969. On September 6, 1969, the editorial team, led by Samuel Tenenblatt at the time, announced future changes to readers:

For technical reasons, you are receiving the August edition of the Polish supplement to our newspaper, *Nasz Głos*, with the current issue of *Folks-Shtime*.

We would also like to inform you that starting with one of the next issues, instead of *Nasz Głos*, the last two pages of *Folks-Shtime* will appear in Polish. (*F-Sh*, September 6, 1969; Redaktsye, 1969, p. 1)

As a result of the changes announced, the weekly’s first bilingual issue debuted on October 4, 1969. This marked the next phase for *Folks-Shtime*, which continued until its closure, simultaneously establishing a completely new newspaper and definitively ending the monolingual era of Yiddish press in Poland. Notably, at the beginning of 1973, the number of pages in Polish increased to three, with nine pages in Yiddish, a layout unchanged through the late 1970s.

At the end of 1969, the newspaper addressed the challenging, emotionally exhausting situation of the Jewish community in Poland. A symbolic message expressed support and justification for remaining in the country, coupled with a clear declaration to readers. In the Polish-language section of the weekly, an anonymous piece of December 27 entitled “Gdy zegar wybije dwanaście uderzeń” [When the Clock Strikes Twelve] stated as follows:

We know that this past year has not been easy. For many of us, it has often proved painful. However, ultimately, the balance matters most. We rely on it as we enter a new period. Along the way, we either discard our baggage or add what is better and more rational. [...]

Toasts are like magic spells. Raising a glass to make 1970 better than the passing year, we hold onto one simple truth: success depends on whether we can work differently than before. (*F-Sh*, December 27, 1969; “Gdy zegar wybije dwanaście uderzeń,” 1969, p. 12)

“Mir, poylishe Yidn...” [We, Polish Jews]

The first, New Year’s *Folks-Shtime* issue of 1969 (*F-Sh*, January 4, 1969; Tuwim, 1969, pp. 6, 10) featured a text whose publication at that time was likely not coincidental. The fifteenth anniversary of Julian Tuwim’s death became a pretext to symbolically recall “My, Żydzi polscy” [We, Polish Jews], a seminal manifesto by this prominent Polish-Jewish poet. Notably, during the interwar period, Tuwim advocated for assimilation, but after the war ended, he turned toward Zionism. In 1944, while in the United States, he began writing the work in response to the news of the Holocaust. The Yiddish translation, entitled “Mir, poylishe Yidn,” was published in excerpts in the literary-artistic section of *Folks-Shtime*. The translator’s identity remained unknown.

The manifesto, filled with despair, profound protest, and a declaration of identity, appeared in the regular, extensive column entitled “Literatur un kunst” [Literature and Art]. The column covered cultural and artistic phenomena not only in Poland but also abroad, especially in the Soviet Union, consistently described as a place where Yiddish culture was nurtured and developed. “Literatur un kunst” included contemporary Yiddish poetry and translations. Indeed, many translators debuted in the column, for example Michał Friedman, who collaborated with the newspaper. Moreover, “Literatur un kunst” featured literary criticism essays and reflections on authors, both classic Yiddish writers (Mendele Mocher Sforim, Yitskhok Leybush Peretz, Sholem Aleichem) and their successors (Sholem Asch, Malka Lee, Joseph Opatoshu, Kadye Molodowsky, Mordekhay Gebirtig, and others). The column presented works by – and texts about – authors targeted during Stalinist purges (for instance, David Bergelson, Peretz Markish, Leyb Kvitko, Itzik Feffer, and Der Nister). In addition to translations of works by Polish–Jewish authors (such as Aleksander Rozenfeld, Władysław Szlengel, Stanisław Lem, Józef Hen, Bogdan Wojdowski, and Hanna Krall), “Literatur un kunst” highlighted significant Polish writers who influenced Jewish culture, such as Cyprian Kamil Norwid, Eliza Orzeszkowa, Stefan Żeromski, Zofia Nałkowska, Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, and Władysław Broniewski. The themes of the works published predominantly focused on the Holocaust experience, though it was sometimes instrumentalized. Furthermore, the pieces explored the shared experiences of the Polish and Jewish nations. Often revisited after the March of 1968, this subject also appeared in the newspaper’s other sections, such as the column “Wspólny dom” [Our Shared Home], edited by Adam Włodek, which became a regular feature at the end of 1972. The selection of literary works printed in the weekly aligned with a broader trend of narratives

highlighting Polish efforts to rescue Jews during the Second World War. Adam Rok authored texts covering this topic from the beginning of the 1970s; e.g. *Folks-Shtime*'s issues of October 31 and December 5, 1970 featured his articles about the Righteous. For obvious reasons, writing about crimes committed by Poles was not allowed.

Despite strict limitations and the influence of advocates for a rigid historical policy, *Folks-Shtime* functioned as a platform to promote and sustain Jewish culture. The newspaper opened its pages to debuting writers, poets, and translators, serving as a form of refuge for some contributors. For example, Bogdan Wojdowski, who published in the weekly, described *Folks-Shtime* as his “only sanctuary” (Bikont, 2023, p. 182). *Folks-Shtime*'s Polish-language section included Wojdowski's serialized short story entitled “Alka,” which became the basis for the work later known as *Ścieżka* [The Path]. Earlier, fragments of *Bread for the Departed* (*Chleb rzucony umarłym*) were also published; *Ścieżka* / “Alka” constituted the novel's intertextual continuation.

Below I quote a poem by Aleksander Rozenfeld in full. It appeared in *Folks-Shtime*'s Polish section in March 1976 and underscores the importance of the weekly, both for defining and expressing the complex Polish–Jewish identity stretching between the past and the present:

a tree once planted belongs to one
land
and a nest in the tree is where the bird lives
where it first spread its wings
so it is with two people meant for each other
one person suited to another
surname name place of birth nationality
address the Wandering Jew then
I walked all the streets squares fences
went to schools they were uphill
I write poems and speak only Polish
I know the lives of old and new saints
the Old and New Testament
I live in a wonderful country that is my
homeland
only sometimes someone will look back
at my beard turning red with disbelief
and not daring to speak aloud
will think
“what is he doing here?”

Aleksander Rozenfeld

(*F-Sh*, March 20, 1976; Rozenfeld, 1976, p. 10)

Identitet: Identity

During the antisemitic campaign, Yiddish speakers faced a stark reality: the end of Polish Jewry would likely cause the extinction of their language. Among those declaring an emotional connection to *mame-loshn* was Hersh Smolar (Grabski & Rusiniak, 2008, p. 63), who, as Anatol Leszczyński writes, dealt with financial struggles after losing his job:

between 1969 and 1970, he published in *Folks-Shtime* under the pseudonym “Stolarewicz,” reviewing the Polish national press. Having been denied permission to emigrate to Israel and grappling with worsening health, G. Smolar accepted an invitation from a well-known Jewish poet, Dora Taytelbaum, to move to Paris, where his sister lived. After some time, G. Smolar settled in Israel. (Leszczyński, 1996, p. 134)

After emigrating to Israel, *Folks-Shtime*’s former editor-in-chief continued writing and publishing in Yiddish.

I would like to stop for a moment to reflect on the looming loss of this intangible heritage of Polish Jews. Among other things, scholars saw this loss as a factor accelerating the already rapid process of assimilation, which Smolar and his peers perceived as a threat. Jaff Schatz discusses this issue:

Rooted in prewar and wartime trends, this polarization [internal division of Polish–Jewish communists into assimilation proponents called “non-Jewish Jews” and its opponents, the so-called “Jewish Jews,” note by AG] was part of a process that was moving all of them toward assimilation. [...] Indeed, Poland had become a nearly homogeneous society, and the Jewish world of compact settlements, characteristic occupational structure, specific values and norms, and language and culture, a world that even when mocked and criticized had been the reference point of the generation, no longer existed. Deprived of this world and weakened by the continuous waves of emigration, even the affirmative Jews’ Communist vision of a “Jewish sector” shrank to a shadow of its former shape, and ethnic assimilation seemed to define the future of the generation. (Schatz, 1991, pp. 240–241)

Józef Sobelman, a former member of *Nasz Głos*’s editorial team led by Smolar, also sheds an interesting light on assimilation:

The editor-in-chief Hersh (Grzegorz) Smolar and TSKŻ’s Main Board members almost formally prohibited two topics that remained indifferent to the censors: assimilation

and mixed marriages. Especially assimilation, as it was like a fence, making it impossible to straddle. Speaking in favor meant endorsing the abandonment of Jewish traditions and alienation from the culture. However, opposing assimilation would equal resisting the communist policy of internationalism. (Sobelman, 2008, p. 197, emphasis by AG)

These words demonstrate the peculiar ideological complexity that characterized those shaping the official Jewish discourse in postwar Poland. The officially displayed communism carried additional dimensions, reflected in a conservative, principled approach to certain issues regarding the preservation of Jewish tradition, identity, and national and cultural autonomy. Highly committed individuals set themselves a breakneck task – one that their successors also pursued: the official integration into Polish society while simultaneously nurturing and sustaining their own cultural distinctiveness, including the linguistic one, through various unofficial decisions. Nevertheless, the project of transmitting these values required strengthening intergenerational relations, which had previously left much to be desired. Sobelman writes about this challenge as follows:

The older generation of Jews did not understand the needs of the younger generation not only because of the age gap but also due to the vastly different historical periods in which these two groups of Jewish society had grown up. Young people had not personally experienced the horrors and brutality of the Holocaust, nor could they comprehend events such as the Kielce pogrom. They learned about anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian Empire from translations of Jewish literature that we published [in *Nasz Głos*, note by AG]. But a pogrom in People's Poland?! Above all, the Kielce events occurred either before these young people were born or when they were just one or two years old. They knew nothing about the pogrom except for stories whispered by their parents. After 1949, the Polish press, particularly *Folks-Shtime*, TSKŻ's organ, was silent about this forbidden topic. For young Jews, the outbreak of antisemitism in 1967 came as a shock. The older generation saw it simply as another repetition of events they knew all too well. (Sobelman, 2008, p. 193)

Under these circumstances, imagining any chance for a functioning Yiddish artistic milieu in Poland – even a small one – became difficult. The milieu that remained after the March of 1968 was frail and literally dying out due to the advanced age of its few representatives. In her book, Magdalena Ruta describes this postwar group of Jewish writers in Poland, including those editing *Folks-Shtime*, like the Yiddish poet Moyshe Shklar. She paints a candid and bleak picture of Yiddish literature in “post-March” Poland:

It was [...] a single generation, the first generation of ‘adults’ who for the most part had debuted back before the war. After the war only seven new writers emerged to embark on a literary career: Lili Berger (1916–1996), Paltiel Tsibulski (1903–1967), Dovid Hofnung (1908–1952), Kalman Segal (1917–1980), Shloyme Strauss-Marko (1912[1914]–1992), Moyshe Shklar (b. 1920), and Mendel Tempel (1907–?). A characteristic feature of this group was the fact that these were debuts by mature individuals; Tsibulski, for instance, was around 60 when his maiden volume was published, and Tempel likewise (the others from this group were slightly younger). *Their cultural identity was defined by the language in which they wrote – they represented Yiddish literature, not Polish.* The exception to this was Segal, who wrote in two languages, Polish and Yiddish. *The absence of the natural generational succession, and also the unusual conditions in which these authors were living (the Holocaust, post-war antisemitism, the system change, and the waves of emigration) caused the writer community to shrink and age. Even without the antisemitic campaign of 1968, it seems likely that before long Yiddish literature in Poland would have died a natural death with the passage of the last writer.* (Ruta, 2017, p. 19, emphasis by AG)

In the fight against the decline of the native Yiddish-speaking community and to gain new speakers, the newspaper attempted to leverage its bilingual nature. From my observations, this approach served to create a transgenerational bridge and promote knowledge about the Yiddish language and Jewish culture. The Yiddish–Polish weekly started to provide information focusing on the language itself, besides featuring various translations of literature into Polish. Notably, the selection of translations was often deliberate, as *Folks-Shtime* published works referring to traditional celebrations during the Jewish holiday seasons, for example a fragment of V. J. Jerome’s novel *A Lantern for Jeremy* entitled “Purimowi komedianti” (from the chapter “Purim Players”) (*F-Sh*, February 26, 1972; Jerome, 1972, p. 11) or Paweł Merlend’s poem “Chanukowe światła” [Chanukah Lights] (*F-Sh*, December 7, 1974; Merlend, 1974, p. 10). This shift became particularly noticeable from 1972 onward, when the newspaper began covering the growing global interest in the Yiddish language and Yiddish teaching programs, like in the United States, and later in TSKŻ clubs in Poland. For instance, as reported by Shloyme Kolberg, a local *Folks-Shtime* correspondent, the club in Łódź was cleaned and decorated as part of a nationwide contest announced by the TSKŻ’s Main Board. Among portraits of writers and other important figures (such as Peretz, Broderzon, Mickiewicz, Tuwim, Anielewicz, and Korczak), a poster appeared with the following slogan: “Lern zikh leyenen un shraybn oyf yidish!” [Learn to Read and Write in Yiddish!] (*F-Sh*, March 18, 1972; Kolberg, 1972, p. 5). The release of Elye Rayzman’s poetry collection entitled *Viderklangen / Oddźwięki* [Echoes] proved to be a significant and hopeful event for the revival of Yiddish-language publishing activities.

The weekly commented: “We believe [...] that despite the long production cycle, we can treat the collection’s publication as a sign of the upcoming resumption of our Society’s publishing activities” (*F-Sh*, October 12, 1974; T., 1974, p. 12).

In the 1970s, two generations of journalists and collaborators met in the pages of *Folks-Shtime*: those who survived the Holocaust and those born after the war. This generational difference directly influenced the newspaper’s content. The past intertwined with the present and various visions of the future. For everyone who created this Jewish weekly in Poland, the first years after the March of 1968 marked a time when a gradual “changing of the guard” took place. It was also a period when the struggle to preserve cultural distinctiveness and identity, with the language of Polish Jews as one of their carriers, became increasingly evident. This struggle occurred in difficult conditions which made it downright impossible to cultivate traditions. Henryk Hartenberg, a representative of the prewar generation of writers, analyzed life’s profits and losses in his poem “Tu jest mój dom” [This Is My Home]. According to him, the language itself was the source of inalienable belonging:

I am back
 one always returns here –
 [...]
 my home is here –
 my memory embraces a space outlined by silence
 I brush away a stain of mist
 [...]
 one always returns here –
 the living and the dead shake hands –
 this is my HOME –

Henryk Hartenberg

(*F-Sh*, June 23, 1973; Hartenberg, 1973, p. 10)

References

Primary sources

- Bikont, A. (2023). *Nigdy nie byłeś Żydówką: Sześć opowieści o dziewczynkach w ukryciu*. Wydawnictwo Czarne.
- Rajzman, E. (2012). Azoj cit zich di megile wajter / I tak historia toczy się dalej (M. Ruta, Trans.). In M. Ruta (Ed.), *Nie nad rzekami Babilonu: Antologia poezji jidysz w powojennej Polsce* (pp. 154–155). Wydawnictwo Księgarnia Akademicka.

Secondary sources

Berendt, G. (2012). "Fołks-Sztyme" – instrument oddziaływania na Żydów w Polsce i za granicą (1946–1991). In J. Nalewajko-Kulikov (Eds.), G. P. Bąbiak, & A. J. Cieślíkowa (Coop.), *Studia z dziejów trójjęzycznej prasy żydowskiej na ziemiach polskich (XIX–XX w.)* (pp. 231–265). Wydawnictwo Neriton.

Berendt, G. (2014). Społeczność na pokaz: Problematyka żydowska w działaniach władz PRL w latach 1971–1989. In M. Semczyszyn & J. Syrnok (Eds.), *Między ideologią a socjotechniką: Kwestia mniejszości narodowych w działalności władz komunistycznych – doświadczenie polskie i środkowoeuropejskie* (pp. 317–367). Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu.

Dahlmann, H.-C. (2018). *Antysemityzm w Polsce roku 1968: Między partią a społeczeństwem* (B. Ostrowska, Trans.). Żydowski Instytut Historyczny im. Emanuela Ringelbluma.

Estraiikh, G. (2008). Wpływ polskich Żydów na odrodzenie kultury jidysz w ZSRR (M. Ruta, Trans.). In M. Ruta (Ed.), *Nusech Pojln: Studia z dziejów kultury jidysz w powojennej Polsce* (pp. 203–246). Wydawnictwo Austeria.

Grabski, A., & Rusiniak, M. (2008). Żydowscy komuniści po Holokauście wobec języków polskiego żydostwa. In M. Ruta (Ed.), *Nusech Pojln: Studia z dziejów kultury jidysz w powojennej Polsce* (pp. 51–64). Wydawnictwo Austeria.

Leszczyński, A. (1996). Sprawa redaktora naczelnego "Fołks-Sztyme" Grzegorza Smolara na tle wydarzeń 1967–1968. *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, 1996(3), 131–152.

Mieczkowski, J. (2012). Media mniejszości w procesach komunikowania społecznego – doświadczenia z terenu zachodnich województw Polski. *Rocznik Lubuski*, 38(1), 119–134.

Nalewajko-Kulikov, J. (2008a). Kilka uwag o wydawnictwie Idisz Buch. In M. Ruta (Ed.), *Nusech Pojln: Studia z dziejów kultury jidysz w powojennej Polsce* (pp. 129–164). Wydawnictwo Austeria.

Nalewajko-Kulikov, J. (2008b). Od podejrzanego do oskarżonego: "Fołks-Sztyme" 1956–1967. In E. Geller & M. Polit (Eds.), *Jidyszland: Polskie przestrzenie* (pp. 277–300). Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

Nalewajko-Kulikov, J. (2012). Prasa żydowska na ziemiach polskich: Historia, stan badań, perspektywy badawcze. In J. Nalewajko-Kulikov (Ed.), G. P. Bąbiak, & A. J. Cieślíkowa (Coop.), *Studia z dziejów trójjęzycznej prasy żydowskiej na ziemiach polskich (XIX–XX w.)* (pp. 7–30). Wydawnictwo Neriton.

Nowak-Małolepsza, F., & Włodarczyk, T. (2010). Żydzi. In S. Dudra & B. Nitschke (Eds.), *Mniejszości narodowe i etniczne w Polsce po II wojnie światowej: Wybrane elementy polityki państwa* (pp. 208–225). Zakład Wydawniczy Nomos.

Ruta, M. (2017). *Without Jews? Yiddish literature in the People's Republic of Poland on the Holocaust, Poland and communism* (J. Taylor-Kucia, Ed.). Jagiellonian University Press.

Schatz, J. (1991). *The generation: The rise and fall of the Jewish communists of Poland*. University of California Press.

Sobelman, J. (2008). "Nasz Głos" (1957–1968) – polskojęzyczny dodatek do "Folks-Shtyme". In M. Ruta (Ed.), *Nusech Pojln: Studia z dziejów kultury jidysz w powojennej Polsce* (pp. 189–201). Wydawnictwo Austeria.

Szklar, M. (2008). Gazeta "Folks-Shtyme" (1948–1968) – refleksje osobiste. In M. Ruta (Ed.), *Nusech Pojln: Studia z dziejów kultury jidysz w powojennej Polsce* (pp. 165–186). Wydawnictwo Austeria.

List of texts from *Folks-Shtime*

1968 – yor fun mentshnrekht [1968 – the year of human rights]. (1968, August 24). *Folks-Shtime*, 6.

Bafreyt fun der arbet profesorn fun Warshever Universitet [Professors dismissed from the University of Warsaw]. (1968, March 27). *Folks-Shtime*, 1.

"Der fidler oyfn dakh" in tsvey shvedishe teaters ["Fiddler on the roof" in two Swedish theaters]. (1968, April 30). *Folks-Shtime*, 1.

Der yurist entfert: Vegn familie-nomen fun kind ["The lawyer answers": About the child's surname]. (1968, May 29). *Folks-Shtime*, 4.

Der yurist entfert: Ven kon men bafrayen fun der arbet ["The lawyer answers": When can the employer fire the employee?]. (1968, September 28). *Folks-Shtime*, 10.

D. Katz un W. Bilig bafreyt fun zeyere amtn [D. Kac and W. Bilig removed from their offices]. (1968, April 6). *Folks-Shtime*, 1.

Gdy zegar wybije dwanaście uderzeń. (1969, December 27). *Folks-Shtime*, 12.

Hartenberg, H. (1973, June 23). Tu jest mój dom. *Folks-Shtime*, 10.

Jerome, V. J. (1972, February 26). Purimowi komedianci. *Folks-Shtime*, 11.

Kolberg, Sh. (1972, March 18). Lern zikh leynen un shraybn oyf yidish! [Learn to read and write in Yiddish!]. *Folks-Shtime*, 5.

Merlend, P. (1974, December 7). Chanukowe światła. *Folks-Shtime*, 10.

Oyf visnshaftlekhe temes: Ratewen di nervn funem tuml [On science: How to save your nerves from chaos]. (1968, June 18). *Folks-Shtime*, 4.

Plenare sesye fun seym [Sejm's plenary session]. (1968, April 10). *Folks-Shtime*, 1.

Prof. dr Zshulkevski opgerufn fun zayn amt [Professor Żółkiewski removed from position]. (1968, March 27). *Folks-Shtime*, 1.

Prof. Katz-Suchi oyf emeritur [Professor Katz-Suchy retired]. (1968, April 30). *Folks-Shtime*, 1.

Puste khaloymes [Empty dreams]. (1968, August 8). *Folks-Shtime*, 3.

Rajzman, E. (1976, January 17). Glob ziemski [The Globe]. *Folks-Shtime*, 10.

Redaktsye. (1969, September 6). Tsulib tekhnische sibes... [For technical reasons...]. *Folks-Shtime*, 1.

Rektor un prorektor fun Teater- un Film-Hoykhshul bafreyt fun zeyere amtn [Rector and prorektor of the Film and Theater School dismissed]. (1968, April 9). *Folks-Shtime*, 1.

Rozenfeld, A. (1976, March 20). Drzewo raz posadzone [...]. *Folks-Shtime*, 10.

- Segal, K. (1968a, July 13). Kleyner felieton: Vegn undzere gefiln [Small column: About our feelings]. *Folks-Shtime*, 3.
- Segal, K. (1968b, August 1). Kleyner felieton: Kegn eynzamkeyt [Small column: Against loneliness]. *Folks-Shtime*, 3.
- T. (1974, October 12). Ukazał się tomik wierszy Eliasza Rajzmana. *Folks-Shtime*, 12.
- Tsu ale abonentn un leyener fun der “Folks-Shtime” [To all *Folks-Shtime* subscribers and readers]. (1968, September 14). *Folks-Shtime*, 1.
- Tsvishn undz – shkheynim [Between us neighbours]. (1968, July 16). *Folks-Shtime*, 4.
- Tu a shmeykhl [Smile]. (1968, June 11). *Folks-Shtime*, 3.
- Tuwim, J. (1969, January 4). Mir, poylishe Yidn [We, Polish Jews]. *Folks-Shtime*, 6, 10.
- Undzer nisht vayter shokhn – Denemark [Our close neighbor – Denmark]. (1968, June 12). *Folks-Shtime*, 5.
- Undzere kinder – a gutn opru [Our children – good respite]. (1968, June 27). *Folks-Shtime*, 3.
- Yidisher film in der shvedisher televizye [A Jewish film on Swedish television]. (1968, August 6). *Folks-Shtime*, 1.

Loshn Under Surveillance: Folks-Shtime in 1968–1979

This article aims to present and analyze the content of the periodical *Folks-Shtime* [Voice of the People] in the first decade after the events of the Polish 1968 political crisis. The consequences of the antisemitic campaign that broke out in Poland had a clear impact on the management of the press organ of the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Żydów w Polsce, TSKŻ). Among the most visible changes, we can observe the modification of the frequency of publication of the periodical from a daily to a weekly (which took place on September 21, 1968), and expanding the newspaper to include a Polish-language part (the first bilingual issue was published on October 4, 1969). My attention in this magazine, which systematically implemented propaganda demands, is drawn to those elements which allow me to see it, using the critical and interpretive apparatus, as a source documenting the scale of post-March 1968 violence and repression. The primary category structuring the argument is the Yiddish language (*loshn*) – the intangible heritage of Polish Jews, which, as I am trying to prove, was protected and supervised in the pages of *Folks-Shtime*. For all the people creating this Jewish newspaper in Poland, the first decade after March 1968 was the time of a gradual “changing of the guard,” and the time of growing efforts to fight for the preservation of cultural distinctiveness and identity in the extremely difficult circumstances of the day.

Keywords:

antisemitism; press; endangered minority languages; March 1968; Jews in Poland; Jewishness; Yiddish language; Yiddish culture and literature

Loszn pod nadzorem. „Folks-Sztyme” w latach 1968–1978

Głównym celem artykułu jest prezentacja i analiza zawartości periodyku „Folks-Sztyme” w pierwszej dekadzie od wydarzeń określanych mianem „Marca 1968”. Konsekwencje rozgorzałej w Polsce kampanii antysemickiej odcisnęły się wyraźnie na zarządzaniu prasowym organem Towarzystwa Społeczno-Kulturalnego Żydów, a także na organizacji prac nad tworzeniem pisma – wśród widocznych zmian zaobserwować można przede wszystkim modyfikację częstotliwości publikacji z dziennika na tygodnik (która nastąpiła 21 września 1968 roku), a następnie rozbudowanie gazety o część polskojęzyczną (pierwszy dwujęzyczny numer ukazał się 4 października 1969 roku). Moją uwagę w tym programowo realizującym propagandowe postulaty piśmie przykuwają te elementy, które za pośrednictwem aparatu krytycznego i interpretacyjnego pozwalają dostrzec w nim źródło dokumentujące skalę pomarcowej przemocy i represji odciskających się na sztywnym formacie periodyku. Kategorią nadrzędną, której podporządkowany został wywód, jest język (*loszn*) jidysz – niematerialne dziedzictwo Żydów polskich – który, jak staram się dowieść, na łamach „Folks-Sztyme” był otoczony troską i nadzorem. Pierwsza dekada po Marcu to dla wszystkich osób tworzących ostatnią żydowską gazetę w Polsce czas stopniowej „zmiany warty”, ale także okres, w którym wyraźnie widoczne stają się dążenia, by w trudnych, wręcz uniemożliwiających kultywowanie tradycji warunkach walczyć o zachowanie odrębności kulturowej i tożsamości.

Słowa kluczowe:

antysemityzm; prasa; zagrożone języki mniejszościowe; Marzec 1968; Żydzi w Polsce; żydowskość; język jidysz; kultura i literatura jidysz

Note:

This is a translation of the original article entitled “*Loszn pod nadzorem. „Folks-Sztyme” w latach 1968–1978*”, which was published in *Adeptus*, issue 21, 2024.

Citation:

Gluba, A. (2024). *Loshn under surveillance: Folks-Shtime in 1968–1978* (Grupa Mowa, Trans.). *Adeptus*, 2024(21), Article 3300. <https://doi.org/10.11649/a.3300>

Publication History:

Received: 2024-06-21; Accepted: 2024-08-22; Published: 2025-03-31



INSTITUTE OF SLAVIC STUDIES
POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
1954–2024