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A New Diaspora Space: Transnational Connections Among Polish Jews after the 1968 Antisemitic Campaign and Exile¹

Introduction

The aim of this article is to discuss transnational dimensions of the aftermath of Poland's March 1968 antisemitic campaign, which resulted in the exile of approximately half of the Jewish population of the country at that time. I begin with contextualizing the subject area and the specific research questions in the decades following the antisemitic campaign, when reintegration processes took place among those exiled and the non-émigrés. Then I relate my perspective to the existing body of literature about Poland's "events of 1968" and their impact on Polish Jews, suggesting the usefulness of the transnationalism and diaspora studies framework for capturing the development of networks among those affected by the campaign and understanding the permanence of memory of expulsion and separation. In the analytical sections of the article, I highlight some typical aspects of

¹ An early version of this article was presented at the conference *East Central Europe at the Crossroads: Jewish Transnational Networks and Identities* at the POLIN Museum in Warsaw on 18 June 2023.

diasporic experience, sequencing them diachronically – early trajectories, e.g. coping with separation, then the maintenance of community through organized reunions and global communication, and attempts at representation – and offer an overview of the networking efforts specifying their major features. In the final section, I consider some limitations of this approach.

The antisemitic campaign in question began in June 1967, with the People's Republic of Poland breaking diplomatic ties with Israel following the Six-Day War and an anti-Zionist witch hunt within the party-state institutions, most notably within the army. It culminated in March next year as the communist authorities' response to the growing social and political dissatisfaction epitomized by the demonstrations of the young generation. At least 15,000 Jews left the country by the early 1970s, most of them as refugees stripped of their Polish citizenship and put through humiliating formal and customs procedures, while thousands of others remained – either by deliberate decision or inability to emigrate or because they had never considered leaving.

My focus here, however, goes beyond the socio-political events in the late 1960s Poland, as I look at developments among Polish Jews, in particular those of the generation raised after World War II, in a longer-term and more global perspective. Some contemporary observers portrayed the situation as “the end of Polish Jewry” (Bauman, 1969; Grynberg, 1968). Naturally, the following decades proved such conclusions wrong: organized Jewish life in Poland continued through the final decades of communism, albeit in politically strained circumstances (Berendt, 2014; Szydzisz, 2019), and was further revived in the 1990s and after, bringing new generations to religious and secular forms of Jewishness, not infrequently after discovering the family secret of ancestry (Borkowska, 2019; Gebert & Datner, 2011; Gudonis, 2001a, 2001b; Krajewski, 2023; Lorenz, 2016; Mazurczak, 2023; Reszke, 2013; Renson, 1996; Wiszniewska, 2014). Such transformations could occur even faster for many of those who left Poland in the aftermath of the March '68 campaign, as the new countries provided favorable conditions for keeping a connection with Jewish identity or building it anew in a less stigmatized form, whether in Israel or one of the countries in the West, among them the United States, Denmark, Sweden, France, Australia, or Canada.

Furthermore, it was through generational bonds that the post-1968 émigrés developed and maintained their sense of belonging within a diasporic space defined not only by what they had experienced in late 1960s Poland (discrimination and forced migration) but also by what they intended to preserve (their memories of peer socialization from

the pre-emigration period) and what they valued as worthy of continuing and creating (mutual aid, entertainment and cultural sharing on various stages of their émigré experience within networks stretching across borders of countries and continents). I am interested in those transnational features in the process of reintegration which can be seen as a collective response to the stigma of antisemitism and national exclusion that resulted in dispersion and separation among friends, colleagues, and relatives. This article addresses the question of how exiles kept in touch with each other and how they maintained or renewed contact with those staying put. How did they form their networks locally and transnationally, including in more formalized ways? Lastly, how new generational self-awareness of a “new diaspora” was formed within the multi-centered transnational space, with Poland being a reference point along with Israel and other places of significance to the “post-March” émigrés.

Theoretical and methodological approach

The antisemitic campaign of the years 1967–68 and its broader political context – legitimization crisis of the party-state bureaucracy, the role of the nationalist faction and security apparatus, internal party dissent, and popular protest, notably among university students, local/regional dynamics, international aspects, etc. – have been studied extensively. The researchers analyzed hate propaganda, institutional and grassroots perpetrators, purges in the communist party, discriminatory measures in workplaces and education, and the growing sense of alienation of the victims. All these factors were responsible for the decline of life prospects for Jews in Poland, and created situational coercion that drove thousands of Jewish families into exile and left thousands of others uncertain about their future in Poland (Czyżewski, 2024; Dahlmann, 2018; Eisler, 1991, 2006; Forecki, 2019; Gasztold-Seń, 2014; Głowiński, 1991, 2009; Konieczka, 2018; Krakowski, 2019; Mazurczak, 2023; Mędykowski, 2009; Osęka, 1999, 2008, 2015; Plocker, 2022; Ptaszyńska & Ptaszyński, 2021; Rokicki & Stępień, 2004; Sęczyk, 2009; Skalska, 2007; Starnawski, 2016, 2017; Stola, 2000; Suleja, 2006; Szajda, 2021, 2024; Szaynok, 2007; Włodarczyk, 2018). Some authors have focused specifically on how the campaign affected the Jewish institutions (Berendt, 2009; Datner & Pieńkowska, 2017; Markusz, 2020; Pęziński, 2014; Żbikowski, 2018), while others explored literary representations of the experience of antisemitic stigmatization (Artwińska, 2015; Czapliński, 2019; Dąbrowska, 2020; Kuczyńska-Koschany, 2017; Makarska, 2019; Starnawski, 2019a) or long-term

linkages between the anti-Zionist antisemitism in communist Poland and nationalist politics of memory in the twenty-first century (Zawadzka, 2023).

Other analyses of the social effects of the 1967–68 campaign among Polish Jews have extended their focus to subsequent decades to offer a systematic sociological account of the exile or non-exile experience. Several studies carried out in the 1980s investigated the socio-cultural aspects of Jewishness in the post-1968 realities, exploring the changing identity of the exiles in Sweden (Ilicki, 1988) as well as the Jews in Poland just before what was to become known as the country's Jewish "revival" (Irwin-Zarecka, 1990; Melchior, 1990). A number of publications, both scholarly analyses and collections of memoirs, focused on diverse aspects of émigré experience in particular countries, most notably Denmark (Olszewski, 1993; Sochańska, 2022),² Sweden (Englund, 2022; Górniok, 2017; Ilicki, 1988; Naszkowska, 2017), the United States (Baral, 2015; Wiszniewicz, 2009), and Israel (Szajda, 2018; Wiszniewicz, 1992), while others covered exile trajectories in various countries with some insights into the parallel experiences of the Jewish non-émigrés (Grynberg, 2018; Mieszczanek, 1989; Starnawski, 2019b; Torańska, 2008; Tuszyńska et al., 2018; Wiszniewicz, 2008).

Among the body of research, there are also studies that stimulate a transnational angle in historical sociology or social history of Polish Jews after 1968 by bringing into focus the Jews returning to Poland in the 1970s and later (Stępień, 2019), as well as the reintegration of the March '68 émigrés through reunions and periodicals at the turn of the century and the impact of the longer-term processes on identity and the sense of community (Molisak, 2019; Sobel, 2009, 2018; Starnawski, 2002, 2007, 2008; Szczepański, 2018). Huffnagle (2013) reflects on political and private contexts of the post-1968 émigrés and non-émigrés transnational contact. Molisak's (2019) chapter is particularly important for analyzing émigré periodicals and online activities as ways to reintegrate and narrate the community of post-1968 exiles, which is also a part of my focus here.

This article situates the post-1968 experiences within the framework of transnationality and diaspora studies (Urry, 2000; Vertovec, 2009). I understand transnationality in relation to the concept of diaspora, a perspective that gained prominence in the 1990s with cross-disciplinary studies of migration and cultural formations, both historical and in the context of globalization (Clifford, 1994; Gilroy, 1997; Hall, 1994; Tölöyan, 1991).

² It is also worth mentioning two documentaries depicting generationally diverse experiences of Jewish refugees from Poland in Denmark upon arrival (Marzyński, 1970/2010) and in the early 1980s (Hirschorn, 1983).

For the purpose of this analysis, I use the term diaspora in reference to a dispersed ethnic or national population, able to build, retain, or revive a sense of community among its actors (individuals, groups, organizations, etc.), while I understand transnationality as a social condition characterized by connections between individual and collective actors beyond the political and ethnocultural borders of nation-states.³ Chaliand and Rageau (1997) suggest that “the specific fact of a diaspora” is constituted by forced dispersion, as well as the preservation of collective memory and the will to keep identity. Another issue is the diaspora-homeland relation. On the one hand, there can exist a single cultural and/or political center of a given diaspora – typically a country or region from which exiles originated or which is seen as representing the group or as an object of the collective aspirations, as in Ossowski’s (1984) notion of ideological homeland. On the other hand, more than one country or region can carry cultural/political relevance for diaspora, thus constituting multiple centers, or the diasporic condition itself becomes a fundamental cultural feature (D. Boyarin & Boyarin, 1993; J. Boyarin & Boyarin, 2002). Those staying put may be spatially separated from those moving, but Brah (1996) argues they are part of a broader diaspora space that can retain a sense of community despite various migration-related experiences. Indeed, non-migrating can be a voluntary strategy of individuals or even families that decide to part, but it can also result from limited resources, necessity, or other constraints (Van Hear, 1998, p. 44). The question of how the separation between those leaving and those not leaving is dealt with, and how they reintegrate over time, is among the issues in focus of this article.

I focus on the experiences of the “March ’68 Generation,” that is, Polish Jews or Poles of Jewish background socialized in post-World War II Poland, who were young adults or teenagers at the time of Poland’s Jewish exodus after March 1968. I address the research questions presented above by exploring individuals’ autobiographic narratives, looking at how post-1968 diasporic experiences were remembered and interpreted and what significance exiles and non-exiles attached to these episodes of their lives. My core materials are anonymous biographical interviews collected during field research spanning over two decades: 69 interviews with émigrés taken at their places of residence or at reunions between 2001 and 2007 (marked as Series I), 15 interviews taken at a reunion in 2017

³ Seen from this perspective, virtually all today’s diasporas are, at least potentially, transnational networks (not least due to digital communication), but not all transnational phenomena can be classified as diasporas (macroeconomic processes or political movements, while often transnational, are not in themselves diasporas, even though diasporic experience often includes transnational economic or political activity).

(Series II), and 83 interviews with non-émigrés taken at homes or online in 2021–2023 (Series III).⁴ Considering the vast amount of recorded audio material (ca. 320 hours from the three series), selections were necessary⁵ to discuss typical (and typically diverse) aspects of narratives, which are both autobiographical episodes and collectively shared experiences. The interviews are supplemented by émigré press, mainly the printed *Biuletyn "Reunion '68"* [Bulletin "Reunion '68"] and online magazine *Plotkies* [Chitchat], and other sources containing autobiographical accounts (published interviews and oral histories, memoir books, documentary films, etc.). All these sources also served as the empirical basis for establishing facts about the networking and reintegration processes, especially dates of events, reunion attendance, and bulletin circulation. The relevant text passages from the sources have been coded for their relation to the main subject, and are either quoted verbatim or discussed. Thus, the triangulation of research data (Flick, 2007a, 2007b) was applied in a qualitative analysis of personally narrated life stories and texts that reflect collective efforts at maintaining ties among people for whom the 1967–68 antisemitic campaign, forced emigration, and the resulting separation were significant biographic and community changes.

Early trajectories: Separations, reconnections, and divergencies

The very process of emigration can be seen as an early transnational experience: contacts with diplomatic institutions (especially the Dutch embassy, which represented Israel's interests in Poland after June 1967), Jewish charity organizations in transit points located in Vienna and Rome – with Sohnut and Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) being the most involved – or joining relatives in a country of destination. While many families left Poland together, emigrating "one by one" was another strategy, sometimes a prolonged one, or merely a result of the changing circumstances and uncertain prospects for those staying

⁴ Interviews from Series I were most extensively used in the book discussing Jewish identity formation in Poland prior to exile (Starnawski, 2016), and to lesser extent in publications exploring the experience of forced emigration (Starnawski, 2017) as well as post-emigration identity and community transformations (Starnawski, 2002, 2007, 2008, 2019b). Interviews from Series II were taken during my first return to the field after over a decade, and were hitherto used scarcely (Starnawski, 2019b). Interviews from Series III were collected as part of the project *Jews in Poland in the Aftermath of the 1967–1968 Antisemitic Campaign: Biographic Experience, Identity Changes and Community Dynamics*, funded by the National Science Centre, Poland, started in late 2021 and carried out jointly by scholars from the University of Lower Silesia in Wrocław, Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, and the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Anna Zawadzka and Piotr Forecki, representing two latter institutions respectively, have been co-investigators and interviewers in the project (details on their contributions to interviewing are indicated in the references section).

⁵ Basic information on participants is provided in the references section.

in Poland.⁶ A woman who had not considered emigrating would meet with her parents (who emigrated in 1969) several times in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. It was only upon returning from one of such trips in 1973 that she decided to join her parents in Germany, later moving to France (Interview I/13). An émigré living in Denmark waited four years before his parents rejoined him:

I would go to the main station [in Copenhagen], I ordered five minutes, I always had money saved for this, and I would call my parents. On a regular basis, every week, once a week on Saturday. So I could hear them, and my mother could hear my voice. I am sure she thought it was not so bad here [...]. But they missed me a lot, and four years later they arrived. (Interview I/29)

Speaking on the issue of separation, a man who had not emigrated but his sister and closest friend had, said:

We kept [in touch] constantly. [...] We exchanged some five letters every week. I still keep some of these letters. We absolutely had thought that we were to see each other for the last time in our lives. [...] Because the world had fallen down. Well, I was 18–19 and all of a sudden it was like this: suddenly people are leaving, they are packing all their belongings [...] and we are living in a world that is more and more closed. I was... we were convinced that we won't see each other again. (Interview III/4)

From 1972, he started meeting with his sister and with his friends in Bulgaria (Interview III/4). For others, in the late 1970s or early 1980s, a way of communicating was to record a cassette at home to be sent abroad – this was mentioned by one of the non-émigrés (Interview III/2). For people remaining in Poland, with limited communication, contact with relatives even in not distant countries, if more than writing letters, required either relying on an émigré making a call, or waiting for days for a pre-ordered phone connection. An interviewee from Lower Silesia whose relatives left for Denmark in the early 1970s said:

I was told "you must wait for your turn." So I said: "I've been waiting for a week already." "Then it means it's not your turn yet." So we would wait... day and night. [...] Either they connected us or they didn't, or we had to pre-order the call again. (Interview III/46)

⁶ See a collection of letters exchanged between November 1969 and June 1971 among emigrating and non-emigrating family members before their reunification in the United States (Bromberg et al., 2008).

Dispersed émigrés, often shocked by socio-economic, cultural and linguistic realities of their countries of settlement, sought each other locally. They maintained old contacts or made new ones in refugee centers, language schools, universities, or even “in the street.” In the early 1970s, Polish-Jewish organizations were created in Scandinavia – the Association of Polish Jews in Denmark, later renamed the Association of Jews from Poland in Denmark, and the Coordination Committee for the Activities of Polish Jewish Youth in Scandinavia (with Danish and Swedish chapters) – to provide space for community-building among the exiles (Olszewski, 1993; Sochańska, 2022, pp. 38–39, 146–150, 179, 243). In particular, the Coordination Committee served as an initiative in Jewish education and awareness-raising about Israel-related issues for the young generation of émigrés in the 1970s and 1980s. Both Scandinavian organizations have continued their activities for over 50 years.⁷

But early on, informal transnational contacts were also initiated. They included visits with family, friends and other social circles in various countries of the post-March diaspora. An émigré in Denmark recalled his visit to Israel in the 1970s:

That trip shocked me. [...] It was important because, firstly, I had family there, which I barely knew. Secondly, I met my friends there for the first time since our departures. Thirdly, the country fascinated me [...]. I felt fantastic in Israel. I constantly had an impression I was meeting my friends in the street, that even some ways of being, discussion, conversation were very familiar to me. (Interview I/24)

Another émigré, for whom Australia was her new country, at some point decided to go to Israel, and spent three years there. She recalled that experience as shaking off anti-semitic stigma and turning her Jewish identity into a proud sense of belonging because “after living in Israel, it was all gone” (Interview I/55).

For people in Poland, however, traveling to Israel was not only much more difficult, but also posed a risk of being interrogated by the authorities, which meant that it had to be kept secret. A woman from Lower Silesia talked about her trip to Israel via Denmark in 1976, where she went with her toddler daughter to visit her brother’s family. Here is an excerpt from the interview with her and her non-Jewish husband:

⁷ The Association of Jews from Poland in Denmark (Forbundet af jøder fra Polen i Danmark) and the Coordination Committee are listed among active Jewish organizations on a website of the Jewish community in Denmark: <https://mosaiske.dk/rabbinat/foreninger-3/> (*Foreninger*, n.d.).

After two weeks of being there [in Denmark] my brother comes and says: "Listen, cheap tickets to Israel are available." I say: "Well, then go, I'm not going, I can't, I'm afraid, I have a small child, I'm afraid, I'm not going." [Then he says:] "If you're not going, you will spoil our vacation because we won't go either, because of you." [...] So I say: "Alright, but how do you see it?" He says: "Don't worry, we're going to the embassy, they know everything, because you're not the only one going from Poland." [...] So they didn't stamp my passport [...]. I had a visa on a separate piece of paper. [...] And my one-year-old child also went [...]. And we spent two weeks there. Afterwards I was scared to death when I was returning here [to Poland] because you had to return the passport. [...] I was scared that my child would start speaking in Hebrew. Because she spent time there with children, so [she learned] "mummy," "no," "yes" – such basic [words]. (Interview III/46)

Asked whether her husband had known about the trip, she said: "Nobody knew. Nobody. How could we tell him? [...] [Turning to her husband:] You didn't know I was in Israel." Eventually, her husband learned about her visit to Israel after she returned and showed the photos that were hidden in her luggage by her sister-in-law (Interview III/46).

Another transnational aspect in biographies of the "sixty-eighters" were further outward migrations from countries of initial settlement. The experience of living in more than one country outside Poland is not infrequent among those émigrés. They could leave Israel for North America or Western Europe, they could move to Israel from any place they had reached as refugees, or they could migrate in any other direction. Such decisions were highly individual, often marked with contingency, and typically dependent on available forms of social and cultural capital, such as support networks in a new country of immigration (relatives, friends, relatives of one's spouse, etc.), professional or educational opportunities (scholarships), language skills, as well as eligibility for a visa or positive dispositions towards a perspective of further movement. Sometimes specific "push factors" would make émigrés seek new harbors: unsatisfying socio-economic or professional situation, the need for a change after failures in personal life, no perspectives for successful integration, the sense of insecurity, alienation, etc.

An émigré in Denmark decided to leave the country because of the language:

Spending the rest of my life communicating in Danish seemed absurd to be. It was in the late 1960s, and English was already the global *lingua franca*. I liked this language, and if I could not live in my native tongue, and that was a decision I had made, I preferred to settle for English, no other language. (Dasko, 2008, p. 157)

Some émigrés suggested cultural distance and inability to integrate there as their motive for leaving Israel. In turn, a woman who spent two years in Germany after leaving Poland in the mid-1970s said she “couldn’t stand it in Germany” because she associated the country with Nazism and “the post-war legacy” (Interview I/13).

The experience of the antisemitic campaign and exile made some émigrés redefine their attachment to Poland. Expressions such as “complete uprooting,” “walling off” the past, or “encapsulating Polish experiences” (Interviews I/12, I/62, I/37) were sometimes used to indicate the emotional distance to the country left behind. A woman who was a child of a Jewish father and non-Jewish mother, who emigrated with her parents to Sweden at the age of 16, converted to Judaism there, and in the late 1980s moved to Israel, said in the early 2000s that she had never visited Poland since exile and that for her it was a “distant continent” (Interview I/37).

Integrating in a new country – finding new social and professional environment, new culture, new identity and having children born and brought up there – especially when no family members stayed put in Poland, could contribute to the experience of the widening gap between the new situation and Poland. The weakening of ties with Poland could also result from institutional obstacles. Such was the case of émigrés in Scandinavia, who were often denied entry visas to Poland in the 1970s (on Sweden, see Jaworski, 2017, pp. 24, 34–40, 53; on Denmark, Sochańska, 2022, p. 239). Still, during the late decades of communism, coming from Poland to Denmark, Sweden, or another country in Western Europe was easier than reconnecting with relatives or friends in Israel. An émigré who left Poland for Israel (in the early 1980s he moved to the United States) pointed cultural as well as political factors of separation:

Even though those emigrants in Scandinavia were not allowed to enter Poland in the early years, they still could listen to Polish radio, they constantly had visitors from Poland, and their contact with Polishness was not interrupted. In Israel, we listened to records we had brought from Poland, we were full of nostalgia for Polish poetry, Polish theater and so on, but it died. It remained in some sense, well, like a fire extinguished by water, where only some bits of something are smoldering. It didn’t end completely, but it was not the most important thing anymore. And it was because of the total breaking off of the relations between Poland and Israel. (Interview I/40)

Indeed, geographic proximity made contact and visits easier, as testified by non-émigrés who visited their friends in Denmark as early as the beginning of the 1970s (Interviews III/19, III/25).

While for some exiles emotional distance to Poland grew, and identification with the old country faded (as shown in the 1980s in Ilicki's study in Sweden; see Ilicki, 1988), others maintained their ties with Poland throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Having relatives still living in Poland (or relatives of one's spouse) was perhaps the key factor in maintaining contact. Some continued their political support for the democratic opposition, such as the editors of the London-based quarterly *Aneks* [Annex] and participants of the committees supporting "Solidarity." Some émigrés would come to Poland and bring literature or documents (Interviews I/19, I/59). Stefan Bekier, a left-wing activist who had emigrated to France in 1969 – where he published, together with other post-March exiles, a Polish-language magazine *Walka Klas* [Class Struggle], which was smuggled to Poland – came in September 1981 with a false Spanish passport to support "Solidarity" and to spread the idea of the need for an independent workers' party. He was deported in November 1981 but continued supporting the Polish opposition (Bekier, 2018; Historia mówiona / Kolekcja Muzeum POLIN, 2021).

In the 1970s and 1980s, with difficulties in entering Poland, the prospects for return were further and further away. After the collapse of communism, some émigrés returned for professional or business opportunities, and others could afford to have an apartment or a house in Poland and spend part of the year there. Such was the case of a family who emigrated from Poland and settled in Australia, but more recently would spend several months in Cracow every year (Interview II/4–5). A number of émigrés reclaimed Polish citizenship and passports. However, for many people a permanent return was not an option. An émigré in Sweden argued: "What distinguishes us from non-Jewish emigration is that most of us left permanently. It is not about aversion to Poland, but it was an attitude that we are leaving and becoming tourists of the world" (Interview I/60). A woman who came to England via Israel said: "When I left Israel, I realized I was homesick. But it was not about Poland anymore, but about Israel" (Interview I/6). Some émigrés realized that their attachment to Poland faded when they visited the old country: it might seem less attractive than their new places, and some pointed to antisemitism as a factor that contributes to the maintaining of their distance towards Poland. But a certain sense of distance could grow in those who had remained in Poland too and was felt when exchanging opinions

with the émigrés. A Warsaw-based non-émigré who was committed to activism among the democratic anti-communist opposition kept in touch with her exiled peers. She recalled that in the late 1970s many secular left-leaning dissidents got closer to the Catholic communities with whom they shared similar political concerns and democratic aspirations. She said she then realized a divergence of perspectives between her activist circle (which included Jews and Catholics) and her émigré friends who “were stuck” in 1968 and “didn’t have a good understanding of our way of thinking; they also didn’t understand our alliance with people, for example, with the Catholic circles” (Interview III/2).

Building a transnational community: Organized reunions

Since the 1980s reunion meetings have been organized to bring together émigrés and people living in Poland. In the summer of 1987, former participants of the Jewish youth camps (organized in Poland in the 1950s and 1960s by the TSKŻ – Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland) met in Denmark. These were mostly peers who had known each other from Łódź. One of the participants recalled:

A friend of mine from Denmark called me and said: “You know, I met this person and that person, and we thought it would be nice for us, people from Łódź, to see each other – because we already raised our children, we have some stability in life, we have some inner peace – simply to meet for a week on vacation and talk and have fun together, dine together, live together like we used to.” I said: “It’s a wonderful idea.” And then he says: “Right, you are in touch with many people,” and I say: “No, not really.” [...] “I can tell you this one lives in this city and that one in another. But addresses? I’m a mess, I don’t collect these letters.” But together we found addresses and informed people. And the first reunion was in Denmark, for people from Łódź, although a few Warsaw people also joined. [...] And soon after we decided to organize such reunions. (Interview I/9)

The most popular form of reintegration has been the “Reunion ’68”, organized in Israel since 1989. These meetings were held nine times, mostly in Ashkelon and twice in Nahariya. One of the organizers recalled making preparations as early as 1987. Inspired by the Łódź reunion in Denmark, he intended to bring together

everyone from different cities in Poland who would want to come from different countries. [...] So I divided the world into zones with numerous émigré communities,

and in each of them, I tried to find someone who would take on the task of spreading the idea of the meeting. (Gryniewicz, 2007, p. 3)

Among the initiators were former participants and instructors of the Jewish youth camps.⁸ The first “Polish Jews Reunion ‘68” brought together over 500 participants and over 700 visitors during the week (Gryniewicz, 2007, p. 17). Up to 800 people came to the 1993 reunion in Nahariya, 1,500 in Ashkelon in 1998, about 200 in 2002,⁹ up to 400 in 2011, and 400 in 2017 again in Nahariya (interviews with the reunions organizers: I/49, II/9; also: Editors, 2011, p. 1).¹⁰

In 1998, one of the initiators said the address list included 5,000 people “living in Europe, America, Israel, and even Hong Kong,” which he estimated as 80 percent of the generation of fifty-year-olds among the post-March diaspora. He said Reunion ‘68 was a “movement uniting Polish Jews – March émigrés and persons close to them,” however, a movement without formal structures and documents (Kantor, 1998). In 2009, there were about 1,500 people in the Reunion ‘68 database ([Letters to editors], 2009, p. 5).

The reunions can be seen as a moral victory for those expelled from Poland. A participant of the first Ashkelon meeting talked about an atmosphere “completely opposite to that of Dworzec Gdański” in Warsaw¹¹ (a common departure point for the Jewish victims of the antisemitic campaign). One of the organizers of those early reunions writes:

In meetings of all those dispersed throughout the world after 1968, I saw the victory of good over humiliation and the reaffirmation of our common identity. [...] The participants took up a thread interrupted twenty years earlier. It was not a sign of chasing our bygone youth but rather a manifestation of sincere happiness to be back with a favorite and numerous group. (Kantor, 1997–1998, p. 2)

⁸ The experience of participation in the youth camps and clubs organized in Poland by TSKŻ from the late 1950s until 1967 is seen as formative for the social ties that outlived the dispersion and separation due to emigration. People active in the TSKŻ circles are thus also among the non-émigrés. While not all participants of the reunions in the 1990s and later had taken part in TSKŻ activities prior to emigration, those who did not have direct connections to the Association were often aware that such organized forms of Jewish life had existed. A number of reunion participants are also former students of Jewish schools that had been part of Poland’s state schooling system until 1968. On the Jewish youth movement in communist Poland, see Pęziński (2014).

⁹ The reunion in 2002 took place during the second intifada, and some potential participants decided not to come to Israel due to security concerns.

¹⁰ See Molisak (2019, p. 275) for a discussion of a connection between the early reunions and the printed bulletin that was started in the mid-1990s.

¹¹ A conversation heard by this author at a reunion in Sweden, 18 July 2002. Dworzec Gdański (Warszawa Gdańska Station) is a train station that, for victims of antisemitism leaving Poland in the late 1960s, became a symbol of exile and injustice.

The reunions form a specific cultural space where pre-emigration involvement in the Jewish community is remembered but also Polish culture is cultivated through debates or songs. The community of fate is what brings all participants together. Last but not least, the fact that the major reunions take place in Israel is also significant, and for some émigrés it is more important to hold such meetings in Israel than in Poland. At least two films exist that document reunions in Israel: one in 1993 in Nahariya *Dokument podróży* [Travel Document] (Tencer & Slepon, 1998), and one in 2005 in Ashkelon – *Dworzec Gdański* [Warszawa Gdańska Station] (Zmarz-Koczanowicz, 2007).

A man from Katowice, who had not emigrated from Poland, participated in early reunions in Israel. He remembered the sense of permanent separation from his friends again and a “great silence” after their departure from Poland: “And they were not inclined to look for [me] because they thought that nobody had remained in Poland” (Interview III/41). After many years his friends wrote to him that a reunion in Israel was organized. He recalled the meeting as

an incredible experience. As if I was born again. Those people with whom I lost contact for such a long time, they stand in front of me and we hug each other. So it was an amazing experience. And also assuring each other that we will stay in touch. (Interview III/41)

The last reunion in Israel to date took place in 2017. Asked about the reasons for coming, the participants said: “We have our common memories here” (Interview II/3); “It’s the only opportunity to meet with my own childhood” (Interview II/8). The very history of reunions, beginning in the late 1980s, seems to be a significant experience in itself for those who attended these meetings. The next reunions, planned in the 2020s, were postponed during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the reunion scheduled for 2024 was canceled due to security concerns in the midst of the Gaza war and missile attacks against Israel.

Smaller reunions have also been organized in various countries, typically as meetings of friends, New Year parties, or summer vacations (in Sweden, they are referred to as *kolonie* ‘summer camp’ to associate with memories of the Jewish summer camps in Poland). Another example is the reunions of students of particular schools or classes. For example, former students of the Sholem Aleichem Jewish school in Wrocław met in 2000 in Paris, and two years later their reunion took place in Wrocław (Interview I/53). Smaller reunions took place in Szczecin, co-organized by the local chapter of the Social and Cultural Asso-

ciation of Jews in Poland (TSKŻ), with over 200 people from over 10 countries and “four generations of *Szczeciniacy* [Szczecinians]” participating in 2003 (Klajman, 2003, p. 15). This and the subsequent reunion in 2007 were documented by journalist and filmmaker Grzegorz Fedorowski (2003, 2007). A reunion in Legnica in September 2012 brought together 70 people from 9 countries, who met with municipal authorities, visited the Jewish cemetery and the former school, and commemorated Warsaw Ghetto fighters at the local monument (Fish, 2012–2013, 2013, p. 14).

Reunions are perhaps the key aspect of the integration/reintegration process within the post-March diaspora. Not only old contacts and friendships are renewed but also new ones are made. The positive social and emotional effect of these gatherings is manifested in enthusiastic contributions to the emigrant bulletin, where reports on reunions are published along with private memories and comments.

Global communication: Magazines and early online activity

In July 1993, at the end of the second Reunion '68, its organizing committee decided to launch a bulletin in order to “inform all families from the address list about the committee’s activity and about all matters concerning our community” (Kan, 2008, p. 4). The first issue of *Biuletyn “Reunion ‘68”* appeared in December 1994. The bulletin was published in the United States with a circulation of about 1,500, distributed to all continents. It is financed by the readers, including subscriptions and charges for announcements.¹² Until 2014, 31 issues were published.

The integrative purpose of the bulletin was stated already in the first issue. The editorial emphasized the importance of the year 1968 as a turning point in émigrés’ lives, as the beginning of dispersion, and suggested that the periodical should become an instrument to recreate broken ties and to respond to the generation’s experience of social, cultural, geographic, and state-related dislocation (Editors, 1994; Sławny, 1994).¹³ The bulletin was welcomed enthusiastically by the readers, and some of them saw in it “[the] first contact with the group ‘68” or “a chance to have permanent contact, flow of information, and

¹² Circulation for the second issue: 1,350 copies, including 60 handed out and the rest sent to the United States (388), Israel (209), Denmark (171), Sweden (163), Australia (135), Western Europe (97), Canada (90), Poland (34), and single copies – to Brazil, Hong-Kong, and Venezuela (Editors, 1995, p. 1).

¹³ Tamara Sławny was the first editor of the bulletin (nos. 1–4), replaced in 1998 by Leon Rozenbaum (nos. 5–10). From 2002, the bulletin was published by an editorial collective (see Editors, 2002, p. 1).

an opportunity to find friendships among ourselves” (Editors, 1995, p. 1). Letters from the readers brought messages such as:

Do you see a possibility of contacting people with one another? I am still looking for my friends from those years. ([Letters to editors], 1996, p. 5)

I was born in Russia. I grew up in Świdnica between 1945 and 1965. I am looking for people who lived in Świdnica during that period – my peers. ([Letters to editors], 1996, p. 5)

Biuletyn 'Reunion '68' should be a communication forum for communities of “emigration '68” dispersed around the world. Let’s exchange thoughts, ideas, let’s inform about planned reunions and meetings. ([Letters to editors], 1996, p. 5)

What a relief when in our crazy American reality, one can sit down and thanks to your Bulletin recreate, at least for a moment, our strange past. And to be young for a moment. ([Letters to editors], 2007, p. 3)

Your (our) bulletin is a wonderful bond with the past, with the true family that we have, that we want to have, and that we want to belong to. These are our true Polish-Jewish (Belgian-American-French...) roots; not only the past connects us but also similar emigration experiences, our struggle for the place in new society, but also the current mentality – integration and difference at the same time. ([Letters to editors], 1997, p. 7)

Biuletyn “Reunion '68” was an effective instrument to organize discursive space and to provide the basis for deeper integration among the March '68 émigrés. It was, along with the reunions, an important marker of this emigration community’s distinctiveness and collective identity. However, online contacts seem to have accelerated these reintegration processes.

The first internet mailing list for the March '68 émigrés was *Świetlica* [Common Room or Community Center], created in March 1997. It was meant to “enable daily contact between us regardless of geographic distance,” and about 200 people signed up (Solan, 1997–1998, p. 7).¹⁴ Five years later there were about 320 members (Sobel, 2002, p. 6). As one of the participants wrote, the group was like

a few virtual tables where various acquaintances meet, sometimes randomly. Some fiercely discuss Jewish subjects, others make jokes about the same subject. There are no taboos. [...] The most important feature of the *Świetlica* is its wonderful closeness of contact between people, many of whom have not yet had the opportunity to meet. (Solan, 1997–1998, p. 7)

¹⁴ As the founders of the group, the author mentions Henryk Chmielnicki, Wiesław Kochański (webmaster/administrator until 2008), Włodzimierz Richter, and Sasza Sharon. Until 2008, the address list was administered by Sławomir Grinberg. See also Editors (2008, p. 14), Sobel (2002, p. 6).

Soon, similar groups were created for the children of the post-March emigrants, and in the following years, other mailing lists were started focused on specific themes, grouping people in particular countries (also non-exiles or returnees to Poland) or coming from the same city or school (Sobel, 2002). These online groups serve as spaces of cultural and intellectual exchange in the Polish language, but perhaps most importantly, they provide a great reintegration impulse. In his memoir, Henryk Dasko writes that in the summer of 1997, he renewed his contacts with his “wandering companions,” having

not only a chance to talk, indeed in Polish, or to get acquainted with one another, but also to discuss difficult, painful and haunting problems. About March, about Polish antisemitism, communism, Jewish victims of the state security services, charms of childhood, love adventures... (Dasko, 2008, p. 203)

Some virtual contacts were transferred to non-virtual reality, and the mailing groups, the bulletin, and the reunions should be seen as complementary forms of integration. A woman from Denmark said in the early 2000s:

We spent three weeks in America to visit our son and my sister, and they organized a meeting for us in Manhattan. But 30 people showed up to celebrate us. Some of them I didn't know at all. But they came to see us because they knew us from the Internet. (Interview I/34)

An emigrant who became active among the “sixty-eighters” in the late 1990s, recalled her integrating into the émigré community as a step-by-step process: reading the *Biuletyn* she received from an old friend, participating in the mailing group, next seeing friends at a meeting of “60–100 people” in Warsaw, initiating a similar meeting in France sometime later (“Ashkelon in Paris”), and eventually traveling to a reunion in Israel in 2002 (Rabczyńska, 2008).

In March 2002, an online magazine, *Plotkies*, was started by two post-March émigrés living in Scandinavia and an earlier Polish-Jewish emigrant living in the UK.¹⁵ The magazine was described as a “private online periodical, mainly for the March generation of Jews from Poland. It was created on the basis of contacts made on an online mailing list” (Sobel, 2009, p. 218, Serafińska & Sobel, 2007–2008; Sobel, 2014; Szwarcman-Czarnota, 2008).¹⁶ However, people living in Poland,

¹⁵ Michał Edelman from Sweden, Sławomir Grynberg from Denmark, and Leopold Sobel from the UK (Sobel left Poland in 1964 for Israel and in the early 1970s moved to England, more recently to Sweden). An earlier online outlet was titled *Migawki “Reunion ‘68”* [Glimpses of “Reunion ‘68”] (Sławny, 1998, p. 19), published by a team that included editors later involved in *Plotkies*.

¹⁶ In 2012, Edelman started an online blog for and about the émigrés, *Reunion ‘69* (<https://dzismis.com/>).

including non-exiles and non-Jews, were welcome to contribute. By early 2021, 87 issues were published, rich in commentaries, interviews, memoirs, scholarly articles, literary texts, and “social chronicle.” The title *Plotkies*, meaning “chitchat,” is a neologism blending Polish and Yiddish. The magazine plays an integrating function and can be seen as a platform for the formation of common discourses, shared imagery, and collective identity within the diaspora space (Molisak, 2019).

Attempts at formal representation

In April 2006, the Hatikva68 Association was founded to “present views as well as for advocacy for the emigrants of 1968 in relation to state administration and other Polish and international institutions” (Pilpel & Dajczgewand, 2006; Sobel, 2006).¹⁷ The initiator was an émigré living in Sweden, Józef Dajczgewand (a repressed activist of the student movement in 1968). Sometime earlier, the initiators met several times with the representatives of Polish authorities, including a meeting with Prime Minister Marcinkiewicz in the Polish embassy in Stockholm. What they wanted to achieve was legal and social compensation by the Polish state to the victims of the 1968 antisemitic campaign. The initiative was intensively debated among the émigrés, stirring criticism for the lack of legitimization in the broader community of the post-1968 exiles. Some critics rejected the possibility of cooperating on the matter with the right-wing Law and Justice Party. Another argument was that the compensation should be an initiative of Polish authorities and not a result of emigrants’ lobbying efforts (Sobel, 2006). Dajczgewand’s initiative was not successful, and it revealed tensions among the “post-March” diaspora around the question of who can represent the exiles and use “collective” voice (Sobel, 2018, p. 124).

Diasporic networks and beyond

The networking among post-1968 émigrés as well as between émigrés and non-exiles can be understood in terms of reintegration processes. There is a sense of generational continuity and uniqueness among those affected by the antisemitic campaign as the separation and transnational dispersion were overcome by efforts not to lose previous ties

¹⁷ The website of the association (<http://68.org.pl>) has not been available for a long time. Also the link to information on the objectives of the Hatikva68 is no longer active (<http://terra.blox.pl/2006/04/Emigranci-Marka68-zalozyli-stowarzyszenie.html>).

and to forge new ones. Significantly, this sense of community is what has replaced, at least to some extent, the painful experiences of antisemitic stigmatization and expulsion. An émigré who admitted that – despite her continued interest in Polish culture and frequent visits to Wrocław – she had never had a deep sense of being accepted (“one of them”) in Poland, spoke in the early 2000s, during the reunion in Ashkelon, of feeling “at home” among the post-1968 émigrés and being proud of the “new diaspora” of people who “spread around the world and found each other after so many years [...] and it is amazing, it is absolutely unique and it is hard not to be attracted by such an atmosphere” (Interview I/48). In 2022, a Jewish non-émigré from Warsaw, who kept in touch with his émigré friends for over 50 years, said:

I have a large group of friends from New York, and from Sweden, and from Denmark, who have their apartments in Poland and they simply come here several times a year. [...] And this is great that they want to keep returning. It is also nice because we are all about 74, 75, 78 years old, so we are not young anymore. And that we have maintained such an active and permanent contact is really wonderful. Especially that we do not have to explain anything to each other. We know everything. (Interview III/19)

Besides private networks of friends or relatives, some émigrés visit Poland to participate in cultural events, including, but not limited to, festivals of Jewish film, music, etc. They also share concern about politics in Poland, as testified by an online petition issued in late February 2018, shortly before the 50th anniversary of the March '68 students' pro-democratic protests and the antisemitic campaign. The petition, signed by over 370 people from various countries, condemned the right-wing government

instigating antisemitism in Poland and among Poles abroad by issuing the provocative law on the Institute for National Remembrance, which threatens with imprisonment for speaking about the Holocaust in a way that contradicts the government's version of history; the government that propagates xenophobia and tolerates extreme nationalist and neo-Nazi movements (*Petycja*, 2018).

The table below presents the networking and (re)integration efforts diachronically, specifying the predominant levels of contact (local vs. transnational), formalization, purpose, and typical social spaces in which contact occurred. The last column presents examples and, where possible, indicates the time when a given form of (re)integration began. It should

not be treated as a full presentation of all events of a certain type but as an approximate indication of when such activities or events became common.

Table 1. Local and transnational integration/reintegration in the post-March 1968 diaspora space

Level	Formalization	Typical social spaces	Predominant purpose or orientation of activities	Approximate starting point or significant examples
Local	Informal	Immigrant aid institutions, social networks, "street"	Mutual aid	1968/69
Transnational	Informal	Family, social network	Rejoining family, integration in social circles, non-exiles' visits	1968/69 and early 1970s
Transnational	Varied	Family, social network, political activism	Ties with people in Poland: personal and political (opposition); returns	1970s, intensification of returns after 1989
Local	Formal	Organization	Education, culture	1971 – Association of Polish Jews in Denmark 1976 – Coordination Committee for the Activities of Polish-Jewish Youth in Scandinavia
Transnational	Informal and partly formalized	Special event	(Re)integration in social circles, cultural consumption, elements of education, political aspects (support for Israel)	1987 – Łódź Reunion in Denmark 1989 – Reunion '68 in Israel
Transnational	Partly formalized	Émigré magazine	Culture, education, politics, "writing history" of the group, (re)integration in social circles	1994 – <i>Biuletyn "Reunion '68"</i> 2002 – <i>Plotkies</i>
Transnational	Partly formalized	Internet mailing groups (listservs)	Culture, education, politics, "writing history" of the group, (re)integration in social circles	1997 – <i>Światlica</i>
Transnational	Varied	Professional, family, social network, organizations	Temporary or permanent return to Poland	1990s
Transnational	Partly formalized	Special event	Meetings in Poland: (re)integration in social circles, culture, education, politics	1998 – 30th anniversary 2003 – Reunion in Szczecin
Transnational	Formal	Organization	Attempts at institutional representation of the émigrés	2006 – Hatikva68 Association

Source: The author's own study

Not all émigré perspectives can be included in this model. As Molisak (2019) points out, the participants of the reunions and readers/contributors to émigré periodicals are prob-

ably the most active among the post-1968 émigrés, but they do not constitute a majority in the émigré population. The participating non-émigrés constitute even a smaller category, and they are a minority among the Jews living in Poland. Moreover, generational differences can be of significance here, as most of the diasporic initiatives were carried out by members of the “March ’68 generation” and generally not by their parents, who were middle-aged or elderly people upon departure from Poland. The fate of parents, however, has a prominent place in the “March ’68 generation” narratives, and it is often pointed out that, as victims of the antisemitic campaign, the parents, who were the Holocaust survivors generation, paid the highest price – in psychological but often also in socio-economic terms – when forced to leave the country in the late 1960s or early 1970s. On the other hand, the integration of the children of those affected by the antisemitic campaign in 1967–68 (exiles and non-exiles) seems to have taken place with some but limited success, although this subject is beyond the scope of the present article.¹⁸

The diasporic network discussed here has its insiders (reunion participants, readers of and contributors to magazines and online groups) and outsiders, i.e. those who are befriended or acquainted with the insiders but may remain on the margins of the network for various reasons or are perceived as “others.” First, some émigrés may not be accepting of including certain non-émigrés in the symbolic representation of the community, as shown by a dispute in the *Biuletyn “Reunion ’68”* ([Letters to editors], 2009, pp. 4–6). Second, while sentiment toward Israel seems to be shared widely within the post-1968 diaspora, and the fact that major reunions take place in the Jewish state proves its significance, some émigrés may hold an opposite view, expressing political criticism towards Israel, and thus may have a sense of difference vis-à-vis the majority view (*Historia mówiona / Kolekcja Muzeum POLIN*, 2021). Third, the Jews who had not emigrated after the 1968 antisemitic campaign, may have maintained a connection with their exiled peers, but the émigré community has not served as a reference group for their own development of Jewish identity. One interviewee, who spoke about his own identity transformation from

¹⁸ In 1997, email discussion lists were created for “three age groups: kids, teens, young adults” with about 50 subscribers (Niemand, 1997–1998, p. 7). Contributions from young people appeared in the early issues of *Biuletyn “Reunion ’68”*, and children of the émigrés took part in the reunions. However, when asked about the young generation’s participation, one of the Reunion ’68 organizers said in 2017: “Forget it. [...] What brings us together is not genetically transmitted. We [i.e. the ‘March ’68 generation’] are bound by a kind of a family feeling, but [our] children are not. [...] And for them it can be like extending a tradition, but it is artificial, there is nothing natural in it. We lived together” (Interview II/9). Another reiterated this view: “There was a period, I think, in 1998, when there was this ‘second generation,’ and they even created their own mailing group. But they have no ‘glue’ to keep them together. There are perhaps a few friendships, but it’s not a great movement” (Interview II/7).

atheism to Judaism in the late 1970s and 1980s, and was involved in forming the Jewish community among his peers and developing its institutional life following the political transition, admitted he had maintained contacts with his émigré friends and forged new ones whenever visiting other countries was possible, and considered these contacts significant. However, when asked whether these encounters played any role in his own identity changes, he replied:

No, absolutely not. [...] If they [émigrés] were undergoing such a process, it was in their own way, and in completely different conditions. [...] In Israel, of course, completely different, but also in Sweden or elsewhere, also different. [...] And it's difficult to compare. It's an entirely different situation. They arrive there [in new countries], and there are established structures and hierarchies, and they have to adjust. Here [in Poland] [...] this is my place, and I am responsible for it. And everything depends on what I will do. [...] So, this is a completely different situation than in the case of those émigrés, right? The sense of having a much more serious role to play. (Interview III/32)¹⁹

Fourth, some people for whom the "March '68 events" were a major life event, may differ in their perception of historical representation. This may be because they emphasize the political activism (students' protests) of 1968 as the primary factor decisive in forming the democratic opposition movement. While they do not deny the destructive role of antisemitism, they do not want the narrative and symbolism of the year 1968 in Poland to be dominated by it. A non-exile from Warsaw recalled being invited to Sweden by one of the émigrés to share his story as a Jewish participant in the students' movement but resisted talking on "Jewish matters." Reflecting on the 50th anniversary in 2018 and commemoration of the victims of antisemitism, he said:

I didn't take part in any commemoration events. I really did not fight for any Jewish cause in 1968. And none of us in February or March [1968] fought for any Jewish cause. And those who fell victim to the [antisemitism in] March, [...] they deserve commemoration, they deserve being remembered, they deserve apology. But, holy hell, this is not the entire history of March '68 as it was. If someone does not understand it, he wants to reduce it all to what [authors of the antisemitic campaign] wanted to reduce it to: the Jewish dimension. (Interview III/54)

¹⁹ For the Jewish non-émigrés, however, contacts with Jews from Western countries, especially the U.S., played a role in providing knowledge and cultural resources in the process of identity formation and community building, as early as the late 1970s. See Rothstein (2015) on the transnational experience in the context of creating the Warsaw-based group called the Jewish Flying University.

The tensions in the post-1968 Polish-Jewish diaspora space may arise due to the variety of personal experiences and views, but perhaps more because of the existence of diverse interpretive perspectives that draw on collective trajectories. As one of the émigrés argued, the Jewish exiles from Poland were “the last generation of Polish Jews, a unique generation, a generation living in dual diaspora – diaspora outside Poland, and diaspora outside Israel” (Namysło & Neja, 2018, p. 193). While the notion of the “last generation” remains a subjective vision among those who emigrated and do not see the link between their own experiences and the contemporary Jewish life in Poland, the multi-contextuality of biographic and socio-political attachments in the “March ’68 generation” is certainly what produces the diversity of references and beliefs. The inclusion of the non-émigré perspectives into the diasporic framework broadens the picture of responses to antisemitism by those affected.

Conclusions

The post-March 1968 emigration belongs to the history of emigrations from Poland. But it stands out among Polish emigrations for its coercive nature – it was driven by a nationalist-communist campaign of antisemitic/anti-Zionist hatred and discrimination, national exclusion, and the humiliation of the victims. It also seems to stand out among Jewish history of emigrations from Poland for the exiles’ strong cultural attachment and, among some émigrés, political commitment to Poland, especially during the late decades of communism. The generationally framed processes of integration/reintegration have resulted in the emergence of a transnational community defined by its Polish origin and the communicative dominance of the Polish language, predominantly secular Jewishness formed through social and educational experiences within Jewish institutions in the late 1950s and early to mid-1960s Poland, the collective memory of stigmatization and expulsion from the country, and, in the post-1968 period, the symbolic and political shift towards Israel. The (re)integration has been a process spanning over five decades now – from early reconnecting with family and friends to organized forms of developing unique communication channels. It is a history of the generation from its early adulthood to the late stages of life. The effects of the reintegration may be seen as balancing (if not suppressing) the traumatizing effects of antisemitism and separation. Whether the sense of community is intergenerational, will be a question to explore in the coming years.

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Unless indicated otherwise, the interviews were taken in the interviewees' city of residence (home, workplace, or a public place)

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A New Diaspora Space: Transnational Connections Among Polish Jews after the 1968 Antisemitic Campaign and Exile

The article discusses transnational dimensions of the aftermath of Poland's March 1968 antisemitic campaign, which resulted in the exile of approximately half of the Jewish population of the country at that time. It highlights some typical aspects of the diasporic experience, sequencing them diachronically – early trajectories, e.g. coping with family separation, then the maintenance of community through organized reunions and global communication, and attempts at representation – and offers an overview of the networking efforts in terms of reintegration processes that can be seen as a collective response to the stigma of antisemitism and national exclusion. The article focuses on the experiences of the “March '68 generation,” that is, those Polish Jews who were raised after the Holocaust and were young adults or teenagers at the time of the Jewish exodus from Poland in the late 1960s. The author explores autobiographic narratives, looking at how post-1968 diasporic experiences were remembered and interpreted and what significance exiles and non-exiles attached to these episodes of their lives. The inclusion of the non-émigré perspectives into the diasporic framework broadens the picture of responses to antisemitism by those affected. The core data come from three series of biographical interviews with émigrés and non-émigrés taken in 2001–2023, supplemented by selections from émigré press and other autobiographical accounts. The triangulation of research data was applied in a qualitative analysis of personally narrated life stories and of texts that reflect collective efforts at maintaining ties among people for whom the 1967–1968 antisemitic campaign, forced emigration, and the resulting separation were significant biographic and community changes. The article is a contribution to the historical sociology of Polish Jewry spanning the period of five decades, from the late 1960s political crisis in Poland's communism to the 50th anniversary of the “March '68 events” in 2018.

Keywords:

diaspora; March 1968; Polish Jews; reintegration; Reunion '68; transnational studies

Nowa diaspora. Transnarodowe kontakty wśród polskich Żydów po kampanii antysemickiej i emigracji 1968 roku

Artykuł omawia transnarodowy wymiar następstw kampanii antysemickiej w Polsce w marcu 1968 roku. Jednym z jej skutków była wymuszona emigracja około połowy ówczesnej żydowskiej populacji kraju. W artykule przedstawiono niektóre typowe aspekty doświadczenia diasporycznego – wczesne trajektorie, na przykład radzenie sobie z rozdzieleniem rodzin, następnie podtrzymanie społeczności poprzez zorganizowane zjazdy i globalną komunikację, a także próby reprezentacji. Przeanalizowane zostały procesy reintegracji, które można postrzegać jako zbiorową odpowiedź na piętno antysemityzmu i wykluczenia narodowego. Artykuł koncentruje

się na doświadczeniach „pokolenia Marca '68”, czyli tych polskich Żydów, którzy wychowali się po Zagładzie i byli młodymi dorosłymi lub nastolatkami w okresie żydowskiego exodusu z Polski pod koniec lat 60. XX wieku. Autor bada narracje autobiograficzne, przyglądając się temu, w jaki sposób doświadczenia diasporyczne po 1968 roku zostały zapamiętane i jak były interpretowane, a także jakie znaczenie przypisywali im emigranci oraz osoby, które nie wyemigrowały. Włączenie perspektywy nieemigrantów w ramy diasporę poszerza obraz „pomarcowych” doświadczeń osób dotkniętych antysemityzmem. Kluczowe dane pochodzą z trzech serii wywiadów biograficznych z emigrantami i nieemigrantami przeprowadzonych w latach 2001–2023, uzupełnionych fragmentami prasy emigracyjnej i innymi relacjami autobiograficznymi. Zastosowana triangulacja danych badawczych tworzy podstawę jakościowej analizy osobistych historii życia oraz tekstów będących świadectwem zbiorowych działań na rzecz utrzymania więzi między ludźmi, dla których kampania antysemicka z lat 1967–1968, przymusowa emigracja i wynikająca z niej separacja były znaczącymi zmianami biograficznymi i społecznymi. Artykuł stanowi wkład do socjologii historycznej polskich Żydów, obejmując okres pięciu dekad, od kryzysu politycznego w PRL pod koniec lat 60. XX wieku do pięćdziesiątej rocznicy „wydarzeń marcowych” w 2018 roku.

Słowa kluczowe:

diaspora; Marzec '68; Żydzi polscy; reintegracja; Reunion '68; badania transnarodowe

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