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Kamila Łabno-Hajduk, Ph.D., is Assistant at the Institute of History and Archival Studies, University of the National Education Commission, Cracow. Her main area of academic interest focuses on Polish emigration in the twentieth century, including highlighting the lives of outstanding women who decided to leave the country permanently. She authored the book entitled *Zofia Hertz. Życie na miarę „Kultury”* [Zofia Hertz: The Life Suited for *Kultura*]. In 2024, she won the Polityka Science Award in the “Humanities” category.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9215-5039>

e-mail: kamila.labno-hajduk@up.krakow.pl

Kamila Łabno-Hajduk

The Account of the Polish 1968 Political Crisis in *Tygodnik Powszechny*

This article attempts to discuss the presence of the Polish 1968 political crisis (March 1968) events, including the related threads and problems, in the Polish weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* (hereinafter: *Tygodnik*). Both scholarly literature and journalism on March 1968¹ display certain regularities, noticed already by Professor Jerzy Eisler. Namely, one observes a dependency between the author, the purpose of their analysis, and their choice of the threads deemed the most representative for the discussed period. The people who emigrated from Poland in the years 1968–1972 (the March emigration) cite the memory of the anti-Semitic campaign as one of the most frequent motifs. The students of the time emphasize mainly the manifestations and rallies, which they organized after the state censorship banned Kazimierz Dejmek’s stage adaptation of Adam Mickiewicz’s *Dziady* (*Forefathers’ Eve*) from theaters, and which intensified when the University of Warsaw expelled Adam Michnik and Henryk Szlajfer. Finally, the people of science and culture most strongly reminisce about the attacks on the intelligentsia, when its most recognized members faced slander in the media – the press, radio, and television (Eisler, 2008, pp. 28–29).

¹ The most important studies of this topic include: Andrzejewski (2008); Eisler (1991, 2006); Głowiński (1991); Holzer (2010, pp. 42–58); Eisler (1991, 2006); Kwiek (2008); Osęka (1999, 2008); Stola (2000b).

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Eisler locates the genesis of March 1968 at the turn of the 1950s and the 1960s, when the political milieu gathered around the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) Władysław Gomułka began to gradually yet clearly distance itself from the achievements of the Polish October 1956 (Eisler, 2008, p. 30). Several years earlier, when the PZPR's First Secretary was Bolesław Bierut, Joseph Stalin entered Zionism – understood as Jewish origin – on the list of main offences against socialism. His decision took place in 1952 – only three years after the end of the First Arab–Israeli War – and commenced the preparation for another great purge (Sowa, 2001, p. 82).

The Six-Day War, with its tremendous speed and unexpected finale, was a huge surprise to the Soviet Union. The Arab defeat and the Israeli victory debunked the stereotype of “the Jew as a coward and a poor soldier” (Sowa, 2001, p. 191). Owing to the West's support, Israel had accumulated considerable military strength following the conflicts of 1948–1949 and 1956. Therefore, already on June 9, 1967, Moscow decided that the Warsaw Pact's states would sever their diplomatic relations with Israel. The authorities of the Polish People's Republic (PRL) enforced that decision three days later. My further analysis requires citing Gomułka's address of June 19, 1967, which he delivered during the Fourth Trade Union Congress.² In the address, Gomułka elaborated on the genesis of the Arab–Israeli conflict, including the Six-Day War. Moreover, he discussed the attitudes of Polish citizens of Jewish origin toward that conflict, and famously mentioned the Jewish “fifth column” – an important fact in view of my analysis. Even the members of the Political Bureau of the PZPR's Central Committee could barely hide their astonishment at the First Secretary's bold theses (Torańska, 2004, p. 98).

As soon as several days after the address, the state began to draft a list of persons of Jewish origin accused of pro-Israeli attitudes. Although the purges were to gain their peak momentum the following year, those preliminary actions removed several hundred officers from the army, including the entire anti-aircraft command. In the fall of 1967, the “staff reductions” reached the editorial team of the leading national publisher, Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe (now Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN). The rise of the anti-Semitic sentiment and the accompanying atmosphere in the public life gave

² “Since Israel's invasion of the Arab countries met with applause in the Zionist circles of Jews being citizens of Poland, I wish to declare as follows: We did not prevent Polish citizens of Jewish nationality from moving to Israel if they wanted to do so. We believe that every Polish citizen should have only one homeland: People's Poland. A vast majority of Polish citizens of Jewish nationality share this view and serve our country faithfully. [...] But we cannot remain indifferent toward people who support the invaders, the destroyers of peace, and imperialism, when danger threatens the global peace, which also affects Poland's security and our nation's peaceful work” (Gomułka, 1967, pp. 24–25).

rise to a group of “commandos” (*komandosi*) – an opposition milieu of Warsaw students, whose members included Teresa Bogucka, Seweryn Blumsztajn, Jan Gross, Jan Lityński, Adam Michnik, Henryk Szlajfer, and Barbara Toruńczyk, among others (Sowa, 2001, pp. 191–193).³

Barely two months after *Forefathers' Eve* premiered in the National Theater in Warsaw, the authorities decided to suspend the production.⁴ The last performance took place on January 30, 1968, and concluded with a rally organized by the “commandos.” The demonstration gathered three hundred people, who laid flowers at Mickiewicz’s monument. The resulting first clashes with the Citizens’ Militia (MO) led to arrests. A month later, the Polish Writers’ Union (ZLP) held an extraordinary meeting⁵ which passed a special resolution drafted by Andrzej Kijowski. The document summoned the authorities to abolish censorship and condemned the party’s cultural policy. Stefan Kisielewski delivered an address with the famous passage mentioning the “dictatorship of ignoramuses” in the PRL. He described the problem as follows: “Censorship is a state within a state – a secret and illegal institution. [...] Today’s fabrication of texts renders their authors helpless: officials cross out the crucial passages and make up for them somehow. Directing the culture is an act of vandalism” (“Zebranie warszawskich literatów”, 1968, p. 105). Several days later, “unknown perpetrators” battered Kisielewski (Sowa, 2001, p. 194).

The events gained momentum in the first half of March 1968. The expelling of Michnik and Szlajfer from the University of Warsaw triggered the first mass student demonstrations at the university. The authorities sent the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens’ Militia (ZOMO) to disperse the protesters, and brutal clashes in Warsaw’s streets lasted several days. The first trials of the “commandos” commenced already on March 9; two days later, students began their protests in other academic centers, such as Krakow, Lublin, or Gliwice. Also on March 11, the Members of Parliament forming the “Znak” parliamentary group (*koło poselskie*) addressed a parliamentary question to the Prime Minister regarding the March events.⁶ At the same time, the press began to publish materials which linked the young intelligentsia’s milieu with

³ Barbara Toruńczyk’s collection of essays seems particularly important. The future founder of the literary journal *Zeszyty Literackie* elaborates on the experience and formation of the “March 1968 generation” (Toruńczyk, 2013).

⁴ The University of Warsaw and the University of Wrocław collected signatures for a petition which demanded a withdrawal of this decision.

⁵ The report of ZLP’s meeting on February 29, 1968 appeared in the Parisian periodical *Kultura* (“Zebranie warszawskich literatów”, 1968, pp. 99–107).

⁶ On the twentieth anniversary of March 1968, *Tygodnik* published the “Znak” group’s parliamentary question, and Krzysztof Kozłowski reconstructed the course of that meeting based on the parliamentary stenographic records (Kozłowski, 1988).

a Zionist conspiracy.⁷ Beside the increasingly visible anti-Semitism in the media, the authorities inspired anti-student and anti-intelligentsia rallies. The first such event took place in the famous car factory Fabryka Samochodów Osobowych (FSO) in the Żerań suburb of Warsaw. The rally coined the slogan “Studenci do nauki, literaci do pióra” [Students should learn and writers should write], which accompanied the future demonstrations of this kind and aptly summarized the March propaganda (Eisler, 2008, p. 532).

The anti-Zionist campaign gained momentum and scope every subsequent week. Workplaces received lists of employees whose Jewish origin would soon make them redundant. Some of those persons, previously unaware of their ancestry, actually learned that they were Jewish. Władysław Bieńkowski writes:

In the atmosphere of that period, a mere statement that you saw the accused rejoice in Israel’s victory was sufficient. Many institutions saw the formation of operational groups typically gathering meager creeps, commonly called the Red Guards. Those groups conducted purges and assumed control over political life. (Bieńkowski, 1969, pp. 49–50)

On March 25, the University of Warsaw dismissed Bronisław Baczko, Zygmunt Bauman, Leszek Kołakowski, and Stefan Morawski, among others. This decision marked but the beginning of the anti-Semitic purges and smear campaigns. Although best visible in the media and institutions, they also exerted a considerable influence on the everyday life and relationships. The society began to manifest symptoms of the anti-Semitic syndrome. The poet Anna Frajlich, who emigrated from Poland to the USA, wrote down her memories of the 1968–1969 period. In an article, Frajlich recalls a number of situations which forced her to leave Poland together with her husband, Władysław Zając (Frajlich, 1998, pp. 6–8). For instance, when the couple left home for a while on January 1, 1969, a telling inscription awaited them on their entrance door upon return: “Tu mieszka hołota – Żydzi” [Here lives the Jewish rabble] (Frajlich, 1998, p. 7). Thus, they turned from Poles of Jewish origin to Zionists virtually overnight – even to their own neighbors.

⁷ See “Wokół zajść na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim”, *Trybuna Ludu*, March 11, 1968; “Do studentów Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego”, *Słowo Powszechne*, March 11, 1968. The latter article reads: “The Zionists in Poland would like to oppose primarily intellectuals and young people to the fundamental imperatives of patriotic responsibility for People’s Poland. We have observed similar efforts for a long time. Who are those people? Regarding the recent painful events in Warsaw, one needs to divide their real perpetrators into instigators and organizers. The instigators include the same people who bear the actual responsibility for the errors and law infringements of the Stalinist period” (“Do studentów Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego”, 1968).



The first issue of *Tygodnik*, a weekly established by Jerzy Turowicz and Father Jan Piwo-warczyk under the patronage of Cardinal Adam Stefan Sapieha, appeared in Krakow on March 24, 1945. To use Turowicz's words commemorating the weekly's twenty-fifth anniversary, "the world of 1945 was slowly emerging from the fumes of the Second World War with an illusory hope for a lasting peace, universal democracy, and linear progress" (Turowicz, 1970, pp. 2–3). Only thirty-three at the time yet already familiar with journalism, Turowicz had previously worked with several editorial teams as a collaborator or editor-in-chief (*Dyszel w Głowie, Historia, Głos Narodu*). In the Krakow-based weekly, he stayed for over half a century. Although issued by the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Krakow, the periodical has retained a lay nature (Mazurek, 2013, pp. 106–116) and still appears today.⁸ The only break took place in 1953–1956, when the PRL's authorities suspended the weekly for its refusal to publish Stalin's obituary.⁹

Tygodnik's editorial team included such persons as Antoni Gołubiew, Józefa Hennelowa, Krzysztof Kozłowski, or Stanisław Stomma. The weekly's milieu aimed at participation in public life, believing that only active collaboration could cause change. This approach meant publishing in the official circulation, which required engaging in a constant game with the censorship. Still, the editors reckoned that actions and attempts despite inconveniences were better than a complete rejection of the little stabilization's realities. In 1970, Kozłowski wrote: "Every reasonable person knows perfectly that only dynamism and mobility among groups, circles, journals, and institutions can effectively counteract the stabilization-related heaviness and atrophy of the imagination" (Kozłowski, 1970, p. 3). One of *Tygodnik's* distinguishing features was its openness to intercultural dialogue and involvement in building bridges between Catholics and Jews. Such effort required reminding the readers about the difficult mutual history, but Turowicz had this dialogue deeply at his heart.

The top right corner of the June 1, 1969 issue displays the editorial team's statement. The time was special for two reasons. First, the year 1969 saw the highest number of post-

⁸ *Tygodnik's* editors-in-chief: Jerzy Turowicz (1945–1953 and 1956–1999), Adam Boniecki (1999–2011), Piotr Mucharski (since 2011).

⁹ Following this decision, the pro-communist PAX Association took over the publication of *Tygodnik*. From July 12, 1953 to December 1956 – that is, for the next three years – the weekly appeared in the same graphic layout and with continued issue numbers. The editorial team included, among others, Jan Dobraczyński.

March departures from Poland (Stola, 2000a, pp. 5–6, 9), which activated and aggravated a sense of desolation: “Everyone has left. We will stay here alone, as though on a desert. They will affix Stars on us and lock us somewhere” (Kwarc, 1970, p. 31). Second, the 1969 parliamentary election gave “Znak” five seats in the PRL’s fifth parliamentary term.¹⁰ Those circumstances prompted the editorial team to explain their stance as follows:

By getting involved in the parliamentary activity, we wish to highlight that only an active approach toward the existing problems allows one to seek new, better solutions. Thus, we do not evade participation in public life, even though the tasks we face are difficult. We intend to fulfill our duties reliably, and to use our rights in a responsible and possibly effective way. (Oświadczenie, 1969, p. 1)

The presence of March 1968’s events in *Tygodnik* still awaits a comprehensive study. The only existing work on this topic is Anna Gołębiowska’s article, which discusses the content of three social and political/social and cultural weeklies that described the commemoration of the March’s fortieth anniversary in 2008. Beside *Tygodnik*, the author analyzes *Polityka* and *Newsweek* in this scope (Gołębiowska, 2017, pp. 69–76). However, the year 2008 was not the first time that *Tygodnik* mentioned March 1968. In 1988, the weekly created a separate column fully and clearly devoted to the March events. And before that date, the editorial team had made visible effort to suggest that they were carefully and anxiously monitoring the course of events, whose long-term consequences they clearly realized. On each anniversary, the editors proved that they remembered about the events which had expelled almost thirteen thousand Polish citizens of Jewish origin from the country.¹¹ To support this thesis, I am going to cite and discuss a number of publications from the years 1968–1988.

One of the January 1968 issues contains Paweł Hertz’s poem “Dwa małe traktaty filozoficzne” [Two Short Philosophical Treatises], where the author writes:

Listen carefully to the night music
That plays for this small planet
Where peace and war, crime and merit
Litigate like on the Judgment Day
Market traders assumed to heaven.

¹⁰ The “Znak” parliamentary group represented the circles gathered around the Clubs of Catholic Intelligentsia (KIK), *Tygodnik*, and the monthlies *Znak* and *Więź*. The group’s leading members included Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Stanisław Stomma, Jacek Woźniakowski, and Jerzy Zawieyski. The MPs of “Znak” often submitted parliamentary questions and voted differently than the parliamentary majority suggested. See Sowa (2001, p. 177).

¹¹ I cite the number of March 1968 emigrants as provided by Professor Dariusz Stola (Stola, 2000a, p. 9).

I have seen the world; I know peace and war,
crime and punishment, frenzy and reason
And the inhuman nature of others' thoughts.
And I pass my own judgments. (Hertz, 1968)

The poem appeared approximately six months after the end of the Six-Day War. The readers received bold, fresh, and resolute verses, where war and change accompany a disagreement with the order imposed after the conflict. We may consider the publication of this poem at such a special moment – shortly before the state's ban on *Forefathers' Eve* – as the editorial team's attempt to tackle the increasingly tense atmosphere that started to aggravate in June 1967.

In the fall of 1968, *Tygodnik* served its readers another portion of poetry, this time by Hans Magnus Enzensberger, translated into Polish by Father Janusz S. Pasierb and Jan Prokop. In "Ins Lesebuch für die Oberstufe" [Into the Reading Book for the Senior Classes], Enzensberger writes:

Read no odes, my son, read the timetables:
they are more precise. Roll up the sea charts
before it's too late. Be watchful, don't sing.
The day will come when they will again hammer lists
on the door and paint marks on the chest of the nay-sayers.
Learn to walk undetected, learn more than I did:
how to change the quarter, the passport, the face. (Enzensberger, 1968)

The translators' commentary helps the readers grasp the poem's context, highlighting the author's significant words which express his attitude to the homeland. The poet is experiencing both *fascinosum* and *tremendum* – being madly in love and simultaneously refusing to accept the existing social and political order. The poem contains the motif of a journey forced by circumstances, which might refer to the increasing wave of post-March emigration. Although such a meaning remains just one of the possible interpretations, and I dare not assume the role of a literary critic herein, we can certainly allow the possibility that these poems reflect the historical events in question.

During the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, "a handful of heroic young people grabbed arms in Warsaw to wage a hopeless battle with the forces of the German police, the SS, and the Wehrmacht, which outnumbered them many times" (Bartoszewski, 1968), The twenty-fifth anniversary of that event inspired Władysław Bartoszewski to pen several pages selecting and discussing

the less known sources on the uprising. Although *Tygodnik* had reflected on that event before,¹² Bartoszewski's endeavor presented documents which disclosed relatively unknown facts. The readers learned about the formation of the Jewish Combat Organization (ŻOB), the preparations for the fight, the feeling among the ghetto's residents, and the uprising's first hours as seen through the eyes of the Jewish fighters and the Poles who aided them.

From 1968 on, the weekly's celebration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising's anniversary – April 19, 1943 – would often coincide with a round anniversary of March 1968. Naturally, in those circumstances "celebration" meant the publishing of materials devoted to the events. The first such year was 1978 – the tenth anniversary of the March and the thirty-fifth anniversary of the uprising – when Bartoszewski and Paweł Śpiewak published their texts in the weekly's subsequent issues.¹³ In 1983, which marked the fifteenth and fortieth anniversary respectively, *Tygodnik* published texts by, among others, Bartoszewski, Marek Edelman, Jerzy Jedlicki, Marcin Król, Hanna Krall, and Roman Zimand (Adamczyk, 1983; Bartoszewski, 1983; Broniewski et al., 1983; Grabowska, 1983; Jan Paweł II w rocznicę powstania w getcie warszawskim, 1983; Niezabitowska, 1983).

One of the following issues contains a discussion of a nearly 600-page-long double issue of the monthly *Znak*, fully devoted to Jews and the Polish–Jewish relations. *Tygodnik*'s editorial team deemed that publication highly important – due to the uprising's fortieth anniversary and in view of the need for an objective, matter-of-fact discussion on those recurring threads. One important voice in this discussion seems the editorial by *Znak*'s editor-in-chief, Stefan Wilkanowicz:

Actually, anti-Semitism in contemporary Poland is purely irrational. What areas of dispute can we indicate? Certainly not economy, for what is the Jews' current economic

¹² The PRL's authorities accepted these celebrations. On the uprising's fifth anniversary, the City of Warsaw unveiled the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes. The state used such occasions for propaganda purposes.

¹³ One of Bartoszewski's texts directly concerns the uprising's events (Bartoszewski, 1978a). Śpiewak's article, "Kultura i sztuka za murami" [Culture and Art Behind the Walls], briefly discusses a related exhibition. Śpiewak makes an important statement: "Few monuments have remained after the nation which has lived in Poland for a thousand years. Old synagogues, cemeteries, scarce books, cups, paintings, drawings, and literary works are all we have left. The memory of this nation and its culture becomes increasingly weak, and the knowledge of its works proves astonishingly poor. All the more so, we tremendously need exhibitions such as this one, even if they are modest" (Śpiewak, 1978, p. 197). Bartoszewski's other text discusses an anthology of the Warsaw Ghetto's poetry – compiled on the Aryan side – and includes the readers' reactions. Interestingly, Bartoszewski quotes a 1944 utterance by Józef Wittlin – an emigrant banned by censorship on principle. Wittlin states: "The hand shakes, the tongue feels parched, and the breath stops when we read these poems. Shame burns the eyes as they move along the black, mourning verses of those beautiful yet bitter pages. The eyes feel ashamed that they do not become blind of reading these melodious relics of extermination and heroism. The words that this poetry springs from are the same Polish words which living people use to communicate with other living people. And yet this seems the speech of those who have already found consolation in God" (Bartoszewski, 1978b).

potential in Poland? Not culture, because the few Jews remaining here have typically undergone Polonization and co-create Polish culture. And not religion, since one can hardly find religious Jews practicing Judaism in our country today. (JK, 1983)

The issue also contains texts by Aleksander Hertz, Jerzy Holzer, Łucja Łukaszewicz, Jacek Majchrowski, and other authors.

In the years 1968–1988, *Tygodnik* published other texts which significantly contributed to the discussion – either by directly referring to March 1968 or by analyzing the general history of Polish Jews and the Polish–Jewish relations. One such voice is Józefa Hennelowa’s article written as part of a debate entitled “Oświęcim po 25 latach” [Oświęcim Twenty-Five Years Later]. The debate took place at the beginning of 1970 at the Club of Catholic Intelligentsia (KIK) in Krakow. The participants included former prisoners of concentration camps (W. Bartoszewski, T. Hołuj), priests (T. Kurowski), and representatives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum (J. Bezwińska) (Hennelowa, 1970). Another interesting text is Jerzy Kłoczowski’s “Spotkanie AK i ŻOB w maju 1944” [A Meeting of the Home Army with ŻOB in May 1944]. As the title suggests, the article describes a meeting of the Home Army’s unit with a small ŻOB unit hiding in the forest for a year after escaping from the Warsaw Ghetto. The text features a photograph showing the Home Army’s and ŻOB’s soldiers together, which is a rare occurrence (Kłoczowski, 1983).

One topic which kept recurring in the years 1985–1986 was the premiere of Claude Lanzmann’s movie *Shoah*. The resulting debate involved Wojciech Wieczorek (1985), Turowicz (1985), Tadeusz Szyma (1986), and other authors. The year 1986 also saw the beginning of a discussion-dispute over the location of a monastery for Discalced Carmelite nuns near the former Auschwitz concentration camp. Turowicz was the one to initiate a difficult debate on the inappropriateness of that decision and its long-term consequences (Krajewski, 1986; Lichten, 1986; Turowicz, 1986). This topic also recurred many times (Tischner, 1989; Wilkanowicz, 1989; Willebrands, 1989; Woźniakowski, 1989). Another important contribution was Jan Błoński’s essay “Biedni Polacy patrzą na getto” [The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto] (Błoński, 1987). The article sparked polemics, continuations, and commentaries by such authors as Ewa Berberyusz, Władysław Siła-Nowicki, or Turowicz (Berberyusz, 1987; Prekerowa, 1987; Salmonowicz, 1987; Siła-Nowicki, 1987; Turowicz, 1987). Today, Błoński’s analysis enjoys the status of a canonical text for the mutual history of Poles and Jews.

The year 1988 opened a new phase of discussing March 1968 in *Tygodnik* in a direct, open manner. The opening proved special because the first person invited to contribute

was actor Gustaw Holoubek, who had played Konrad in Dejmek's stage adaptation of *Forefathers' Eve*. In an interview with Anna Mieszczanek, Holoubek states:

Playing Konrad was not a typical acting performance; instead, I largely participated in the event equally to the audience – together with them, and among them. [...] Yes, that was a fascinating audience. I cannot recall a similar event from my entire acting career. (Mieszczanek & Holoubek, 1988)

Further on, the actor admits that even the politically heated years 1980–1982 remained far behind the atmosphere of 1968. Anxiously following the course of events, Holoubek quickly began to realize that the political storm aimed to find the people guilty of the disaster, in that particular case – Jews and students. Referring to the post-March emigration, the actor bitterly states: "It was a tragedy whose essence still awaits a proper presentation. We keep paying its price until today. Besides the political aspect, they did something one must not do" (Mieszczanek & Holoubek, 1988). In the same issue, Turowicz provides an account of a conference which discussed March 1968 as one of the topics. The event took place at the turn of January and February 1988 at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The participants included, among others, Jan Błoński, Krystyna Kersten, Jerzy Kłoczowski, and Stanisław Stomma (Turowicz, 1988).

In the next issue, Ryszard Terlecki discusses the course of March 1968 in Krakow (Terlecki, 1988). Describing the events most important for Krakow – and thus significant also for Warsaw – Terlecki writes that the March remained a forbidden topic for many years:

Numerous authors in Poland and abroad have repeatedly stated that it was too early to evaluate the March. Today, after twenty years – including so many years of silence – one feels tempted to say that it is too late. But that would not be true. [...] We must recall the facts, pave their way toward public awareness, and make them familiar to those who still fail to notice that time marches inexorably on. (Terlecki, 1988)

Another author to share his observations in the discussed issue is Andrzej Drawicz, who wrote an article entitled "Marzec w prasie" [The March in the Press] (Drawicz, 1988). During the student protests, Drawicz remained in the Soviet Union and learned about the events from newspapers. Upon returning to Poland, he painstakingly collected printed materials on the March, paying special attention to the language, the addressees, and the most "distinguished" authors of the anti-Semitic campaign. He also watched the TV news *Dziennik telewizyjny*, where journalists undertook "unmasking actions with particular passion and

perseverance" (Drawicz, 1988). Finally, with a twenty years' delay, the weekly published the parliamentary question of the "Znak" group. The text accompanies Kozłowski's article, which attempts to reconstruct the parliamentary session of April 1968 based on the stenographic records (Kozłowski, 1988).

The year 1998 saw the thirtieth anniversary of the March events. Already one of *Tygodnik's* January issues published an analysis by Father Tomasz Słomiński, who attempts to capture and characterize the phenomenon of the "March 1968 generation." Beside the Polish March, the priest discusses the crucial events of the late 1960s abroad, from the economic reform in Hungary to the first moon landing in 1969. He unfolds a bitter reflection and asks a rhetorical question: "Can we consider the year 1968, which marked a breakthrough in the history of modern society, as the beginning of the civilization of death?" (Słomiński, 1998).

Afterwards, a special March issue published Andrzej Romanowski's interview with Jacek Kuroń. The conversation focuses on the intellectual and university milieu regarding the genesis of March 1968. When discussing the organization of a student protest in Warsaw, Kuroń confesses: "As I have written numerous times, I was aware that I led children to prisons through my own example. This burden has remained and it will always live within me" (Romanowski & Kuroń, 1998). One notices links between this conversation and an analysis by Marcin Król, who attempts to summarize the existing knowledge of the 1968 events. The author defines three most serious consequences of the March: opening the door for anti-Semitism, undermining the foundations of the socialist-Marxist vision, and delivering a blow to the Polish intellectual and artistic life. At the end, Król offers a bitter conclusion:

Thirty years later, the March seems a rather pathetic event. Protests regarding *Forefathers' Eve*, students' childish demands, lack of understanding among most of the society, the disgusting anti-Semitism of meager journalists from nowhere, the collapse of ideals, the sadness of emigrations, and relatively mild prison sentences – all this deserves nothing more than a page in a contemporary history textbook. (Król, 1998)

One of the next issues contains fragments of Andrzej Kijowski's diary spanning the years 1955–1969, where the March threads also appear (Kijowski, 1998a; cf. 1998b).

Anna Gołębiowska's abovementioned text (Gołębiowska, 2017, pp. 70–72) discusses the articles and analyses published in *Tygodnik* to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of March 1968. Therefore, I only need to mention that the year 2008 brought a special issue (*Tygodnik Powszechny* 10.2008; Friszke, 2008; Sabor, Brzeziecki, & Stola, 2008) and several other

texts focusing on the topic. Piotr Mucharski's interview with Jan Tomasz Gross concerns the latter's family history during the war, the attitude toward Poland, and being a Jew in Poland. These threads lead Gross to mention the events that took place forty years earlier: "In March 1968, my friends and I all went to prison. However, they released me quite quickly, at the end of July, after less than five months. Then my mother said, 'Plenty of your friends have left. It seems we should too'" (Mucharski & Gross, 2008). A few lines below, Gross continues as follows: "To me, those events were first and foremost a political confrontation. We served as a detonator allowing them to play their cards in the circles of power. They had been watching us for a long time after all, and they used anti-Semitism in a completely instrumental manner" (Mucharski & Gross, 2008). As Marian Stala (2008) reports, the celebrations of the March's round anniversary included the screening of Gomułka's speech in front of the Palace of Culture and Science (PKiN) in Warsaw. One of the weekly's subsequent issues contains an interview of Agnieszka Sabor and Michał Olszewski with Zbigniew Gluza, who discusses the crucial moments in the PRL's history. Gluza evaluates March 1968 as one of the Polish months which defined "the beginning of a social awakening and the first voice of a systemic rebellion" (Sabor, Olszewski, & Gluza, 2008).

On the fiftieth anniversary of the March, *Tygodnik* released a special issue entitled "Marzec. 50 lat później" [The March Fifty Years Later]. This collection of articles gathers recognized, eminent specialists in the Jewish topic – historians, artists, writers, and journalists. The texts include: "Ślad śladu" [A Trace of the Trace] by Piotr Paziński, "Bardzo smutna rocznica" [A Very Sad Anniversary] – Aleksander Smolar's interview with Michał Oikoński, "Interpelacja" [The Parliamentary Question] – a reprint of Krzysztof Kozłowski's 1988 account, "Siła mądrego buntu" [The Power of a Wise Rebellion] by Ellen Ueberschar, "Każdy w swoją stronę" [Everybody Went Their Own Way] by Dariusz Kosiński, "Najpiękniejsze miejsce na świecie" [The Most Beautiful Place in the World] by Ewa Winnicka, "Kraj, w którym nie mogli być Polakami" [The Country Where They Could Not Be Poles] by Dariusz Stola, and "Sublokator, który czuł się jak w domu" [A Roomer Who Felt at Home] – an interview by Beata Chomętowska with Justyna Koszarska-Szulc and Natalia Romik. This issue remains the weekly's most comprehensive work on March 1968. Paziński's analysis stands out in particular, because the author shifts the focus from the commonly known facts to the long-term consequences of the March, including its presence and persistence in the language, narratives, and thoughts. The article begins as follows: "The March concerns everybody: those expelled from Poland in a humiliating manner and those who stayed; those who expelled and those who only felt glad that the Jews were leaving again" (Paziński, 2018).

As shown above, the texts published in *Tygodnik* discuss various aspects of March 1968 and present this topic from numerous perspectives, such as the historical, political, social, or linguistic one. Still, the stance of the weekly's editorial team and milieu has remained basically uniform and consistent. As a periodical released in the official circulation throughout the entire PRL period, *Tygodnik* attempted to conduct a dialogue with the reality despite censorship and political pressure. Although March 1968 became the weekly's permanent topic only in 1988, already the previous issues offered texts that insightful readers could consider as proof of the editorial team's attempts to formulate a certain "subliminal" message of civil involvement and fundamental human values. This way, the authors showed that they remembered about the March through all that time. But the topic was difficult and painful for Poles and Jews alike, and the way to an open, free debate remained long.

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The Account of the Polish 1968 Political Crisis in *Tygodnik Powszechny*

This article attempts to discuss the presence of the Polish 1968 political crisis (March 1968) events in the Polish weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* (until 2023). The Krakow-based periodical represents open Catholicism and continued to appear in the communist Poland's official circulation – except the years 1953–1956, when the state's authorities suspended the weekly for its refusal to publish Joseph Stalin's obituary. The periodicals of the PRL's official circulation marginalized or – more often – omitted the topic of March 1968 for a long time afterwards. *Tygodnik* has always published anniversary analyses of other important events in Jewish history and the Polish–Jewish relations, such as the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. However, the March explicitly appeared in its pages as late as on the twentieth anniversary. After 1989, the weekly has regularly discussed this topic, both on the anniversaries and beyond. The authors include, among others, Andrzej Drawicz, Jan Tomasz Gross, Gustaw Holoubek, Marcin Król, Jacek Kuroń, Andrzej Romanowski, Ryszard Terlecki, and Leopold Unger. This

article analyzes *Tygodnik*'s content related to one of the crucial "Polish months" in the post-war history of Poland.

Keywords:

Tygodnik Powszechny; opposition in the PRL; Polish–Jewish relations; March 1968; post-March emigration; anti-Semitic campaign; student protests

Marzec 1968 na łamach „Tygodnika Powszechnego”

Przedmiotem niniejszego artykułu jest próba analizy i omówienie obecności wydarzeń Marca '68 w publikacjach „Tygodnika Powszechnego” do 2023 roku. To pismo reprezentujące tzw. otwarty katolicyzm, obecne w oficjalnym obiegu wydawniczym w czasach PRL (z wyłączeniem lat 1953–1956, kiedy to władze wstrzymały jego druk w odpowiedzi na odmowę redakcji opublikowania nekrologu Józefa Stalina). Przez długi czas po tzw. wypadkach marcowych na łamach periodyków ukazujących się w obiegu prasowym i wydawniczym PRL tematyka ta była marginalizowana lub (częściej) przemilczana. Choć w krakowskim piśmie nie brakowało rocznicowych omówień innych ważnych dla historii Żydów i relacji polsko-żydowskich wydarzeń, jak powstanie w getcie warszawskim, to Marzec '68 pojawił się na jego łamach dopiero w dwudziestą rocznicę. Po 1989 roku gościł już regularnie i nie tylko rocznicowo. Wśród autorów, którzy tematem Marca na łamach „Tygodnika Powszechnego” się zajmowali, wymienić należy m.in. Andrzeja Drawicza, Jana Tomasza Grossa, Gustawa Holoubka, Marcina Króla, Jacka Kuronia, Andrzeja Romanowskiego, Ryszarda Terleckiego, Leopolda Ungera. W artykule poddana została analizie zawartość „Tygodnika Powszechnego” pod kątem jednego z kluczowych „polskich miesięcy” dla powojennej historii Polski.

Słowa kluczowe:

„Tygodnik Powszechny”; opozycja w PRL; relacje polsko-żydowskie; Marzec 1968; emigracja pomarcowa; kampania antysemicka; strajki studenckie

Note:

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