

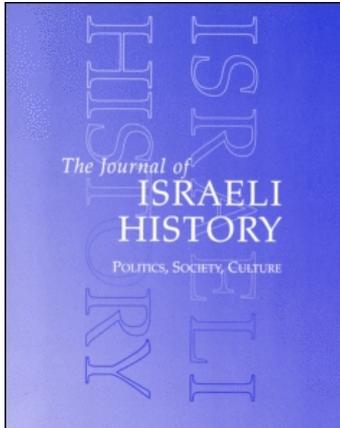
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Foreigners or co-nationals? Israel, Poland, and Polish Jewry (1948–1967)

Marcos Silber*

The article argues that a central aspect of Israeli-Polish relations before 1967 was their tripartite nature, involving the two states and Polish Jewry. The main goal of Israeli diplomacy in Poland, to which it subordinated a variety of interests, even those that were central to Israel's foreign policy, was the immigration to Israel of Polish Jewry. The three elements of the triangular relations (Israel, Poland, and Polish Jewry) influenced one another through their policy and behavior, monitored each other, interpreted each other's actions, and reacted accordingly. The *aliyah* from Poland engendered a new dynamic in the relations. Israel was able to implement its nation-building policy through the immigration of a desired element, and the Polish authorities, by allowing emigration of an unassimilable ethnonational minority, homogenized the nationalizing Polish state. After the massive emigration of the Jews, another element connecting and reshaping the three sides of the triangle emerged: the competition to represent the memory of Polish Jewry, conceived, too, as an instrument in the nation-building process of both states.

Keywords: Israeli foreign policy; *aliyah*; Polish Jewry; Poland; nation building

A triadic nexus

Between 1948 and 1967, Poland and Israel seemed to be peripheral to one another. They belonged to two opposing geopolitical blocs and shared few economic interests. Nevertheless, rarely have two countries been so deeply intertwined. This is because Israeli-Polish diplomatic relations between 1948 and 1967 were not, in fact, bilateral relations but part of what Rogers Brubaker has termed a “triadic nexus,” linking two states shaped along ethnonational lines through a third element, a national minority with ties to its “external national homeland.” Whereas such a triadic connection is often present in countries with Jewish communities, it is particularly salient in the case of Poland, Israel, and Polish Jewry.¹

One component of this special triadic relationship was the government of postwar Communist Poland, which acted mainly in the name of the Polish nation defined in ethnocultural terms. In Brubaker's terms, it employed a nationalizing policy toward its national minorities.² Vis-à-vis its Jewish minority Poland applied a dual policy. On the one hand, the regime encouraged rapid acculturation and integration, while at the same time creating an impressive network of Jewish cultural, social, and even religious organizations that was more developed than that of other national minorities, despite being firmly under the aegis of the ruling Communist Party (PZPR – Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza), and also much more developed than anywhere else in the Soviet bloc.³ On the other hand, the regime kept an eye on the Jews, whom it suspected of being in league with foreign

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elements.⁴ For instance, in early 1948 the Polish secret service stated that “all Jewish political groups active among the Jews, with the exception of the PPR [Polska Partia Robotnicza – the Communist Party before its union with the socialists to form the PZPR], are dependent on foreign headquarters, for which the Jewish question in Poland is no more than an instrument in the political game played by the leaders of such social groups.”⁵ The Polish secret service not only monitored the activities of the Israeli legation. It also monitored the last Zionists on Polish soil and other larger segments of the Jewish population, and even inside the Communist Party looked for “enemy’s tentacles directed toward the members of our party” of Jewish origin.⁶ The suspicion toward the Jews in Poland did not disappear with the collapse of Stalinism in Poland and the return of Władysław Gomułka to power; it continued throughout the 1960s.⁷ In addition, the regime criticized expressions of Jewish nationalism, even though societal conditions were highly conducive to ethnonational sentiments among them.⁸ In other words, the policy toward them was simultaneously assimilationist and “dissimilationist,” integrative and differentialist.

The second component in these triangular relations was Israel, itself a nationalizing state defined as a Jewish state. Its political elite asserted that Israel had the right, or even an obligation, to monitor the conditions, promote the welfare, support the activities and institutions, and protect the interests of their ethnonational fellows: the Jews worldwide, including in Poland. However, in the case of Polish Jewry the ultimate task in this context was to promote their *aliyah* (immigration to the Jewish state). In bilateral relations the Jewish question was the crucial issue.

The third component of the triangular relations consisted of the Jews in Poland, an ethnocultural minority defined as a national minority by the Polish state as well as by Israel. These Jews were caught between two mutually exclusive nationalisms. They belonged by citizenship to Poland but by ethnonational affinity to Israel, an external national homeland. An analysis of different texts produced by leading figures of Polish Jewry (resolutions, literary texts, essays, as well as autobiographical texts written retrospectively) reveals that the writers largely adopted the ethnonational paradigm.⁹ In spite of the fact that all these materials have significant problems as sources, it is clear that they reflect the adoption to varying degrees of ethnocultural and ethnonational concepts.¹⁰ But the adoption of the ethnonational paradigm did not mean the adoption of either nationalism. On the contrary, the leading voices among postwar Polish Jewry often rejected both the Israeli claim to monitor their situation and speak on their behalf (as they wanted to represent their own interests) and the increasingly nationalizing Polish national-communism that tried to marginalize the Jewish presence, leading in practice to the emigration of the vast majority of Jews, wave after wave.¹¹ The famous Polish poet Czesław Miłosz expressed their dilemma sensitively: “For many who must choose between their Polish fatherland and the fear that they will remain hated ‘outsiders’ in it, the decision is not easy and even contains tragic elements.”¹²

These triangular relations (Israel, Poland, and Polish Jewry) were so closely intertwined that they created a special dialectic which led to constant changes within each of the three components. This article will follow the dynamics of these relations, with particular focus on the perspective of Israeli diplomacy.

Israel and its ethnic co-nationals in Poland

In the context of Israeli foreign policy, this triadic nexus was not exclusive to relations with Poland. As the first Israeli prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, explained at the first meeting of the entire Israeli diplomatic corps in 1950, “the State of Israel is different from

other countries because it is not a state of its inhabitants but rather exists for the ingathering of all diaspora communities. . . . Our representatives are different because they are not envoys to the gentiles but to the Jews."¹³ For Israel Barzilai, the first Israeli minister in Warsaw, *aliyah* was the main point on the Israeli agenda vis-à-vis Poland. His main effort, and the main effort of Israeli diplomatic missions throughout the 1950s and 1960s, was to open the gates to Jewish emigration or increase the probability of such emigration.¹⁴

In the immediate postwar period Zionist efforts to establish a Jewish state were actively supported by the Polish state through diplomatic actions,¹⁵ military support for the nascent state,¹⁶ and, most importantly, by opening the Polish border to Jewish emigration (legal or illegal).¹⁷ However, when Barzilai presented his credentials in Warsaw in the autumn of 1948, Jewish emigration from Poland had been banned after the big wave of postwar emigration permitted by the Polish authorities, during which around 130,000 immigrants had left Poland, the vast majority in the summer and fall of 1946, following the Kielce pogrom of 4 July 1946.¹⁸ Nonetheless, an active community of around 100,000 Jews remained in Poland.¹⁹ In August 1949, after long negotiations and internal discussions, Władysław Wolski, the minister of public administration (actually minister of interior), informed Barzilai that Jewish emigration would be allowed for a certain period of time. This change in Polish policy toward Jewish emigration from Poland was not only the result of the relatively friendly relations between the two states, which indeed existed, despite what Barzilai described as the "increasing reservation" toward Israel that Poland manifested even immediately after the establishment of diplomatic relations.²⁰ This "reservation" was a direct outcome of the Cold War and the alignment of each of the states in opposing geopolitical blocs. At this time the secret police began to monitor the activities of the Israeli legation in Warsaw. Their first report explained that the monitoring was necessary because, as a result of the "50 years of British control of Palestine and . . . its specific importance and location, British intelligence agents were densely dispersed, [and] it is suspected that members of the legation would be recruited by them."²¹ This suspicious attitude existed even though, with one exception, all of the members of the legation, including Barzilai, belonged to the Mapam Party, which had a strong pro-Soviet orientation.

Nor can the change in emigration policy be attributed only to the lengthy negotiations of Barzilai with the Polish authorities and his endless explanations about the urgent needs of the young state.²² First and foremost it resulted from the nation-building needs of the national-communist Polish state, which was willing to permit what it saw as undesirable elements ("clericals and Zionists") to emigrate to Israel.²³

Thus, in late 1949, Poland was the only East European country with a significant Jewish population that permitted emigration to Israel. This policy highlighted the differences among the different states of the Soviet bloc, especially the Soviet Union and Poland, with regard to Jewish emigration in particular and Jewish issues in general. Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett considered this policy the achievement of Israel's primary goal in Poland. For Sharett, Barzilai, and many others, the successful integration of Jewish immigrants from Poland was crucial to the ongoing "liquidation of the diaspora in Poland," as well as in other parts of Eastern Europe. They believed that their successful integration might lead other East European countries to allow Jewish emigration to Israel, in particular Romania and Hungary, which had just banned such emigration, but there is no doubt that Sharett hoped the Soviet Union would also start allowing Jews to leave for Israel.²⁴ Shmuel Eliashiv, director of the Eastern Europe Division in the Israeli Foreign Ministry and later Israeli minister to the USSR, wrote to Sharett that "if, Heaven forbid,

we fail [with respect to immigration from Poland], it may cause severe harm to our struggle for immigration from other countries as well. From this standpoint, it is essential to pay special attention to the immigrants from Poland.”²⁵ Sharett adopted this view and asked the government to support positive discrimination in favor of the Polish immigrants. The success of the absorption of Polish Jewry in the Israeli nation-state was seen as a necessary condition for implementing the *aliyah* policy regarding East European Jews, who were considered a valuable element in the nation-building process.²⁶

However, *aliyah* from Poland in 1949–50 was limited and selective. The Polish Communist Party restricted the number of potential emigrants to 15,000, encouraging the emigration of Zionists and religious Jews, while making it difficult for “workers and the working intelligentsia” to emigrate.²⁷ This policy was also a result of conflicts and contradictory tendencies among the ruling circles. On the one hand, some circles supported a relatively liberal policy toward Jewish emigration, whereas others wanted to limit it. The latter included leading figures among the local Jewish communist circles who opposed the Jews’ desire to emigrate because it weakened Polish society.²⁸ Sharett was aware of this dual Polish policy toward Jewish emigration: “on the one hand permitting *aliyah* in principle and in practice but on the other hand ensuring that there are in fact few immigrants.”²⁹ This dual policy resulted in increased diplomatic efforts to convince the Polish leadership to ease emigration.

The dynamics of the emigration process on the one hand, and the inner struggles and discussions within the Polish state and party apparatus on the other hand, brought about a radical change in the size and social composition of Polish Jewry. First and foremost, the number of emigrants was twice as many as the Polish communist authorities had estimated: by the end of the wave of *aliyah* in 1950, around 28,000–29,000 Polish Jews had emigrated to Israel.³⁰ The Jewish community in Poland diminished significantly by one third to around 70,000 Jews. Second, the social characteristics of the emigrants changed the nature of the remaining Jewish community. Most of the emigrants were connected to commerce or were traditional craftsmen (tailors, for instance), as well as religious or traditional Jews and Zionists.³¹

The centrality of *aliyah* in the relations with Poland and other states of the Soviet bloc was well known. Barzilai tried to use the question of *aliyah* from Eastern Europe in general and Poland in particular to change the Western orientation of Israel. According to Barzilai, the Jewish immigration had to be taken into account even when considering Israel’s alignment in the increasingly polarized international arena. In other words, Barzilai used the pretext of *aliyah* to influence even the most central issue in the foreign policy of the new state. At the aforementioned meeting of Israeli diplomats, Barzilai clashed with Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, asserting that Israel should

implement a policy of non-alignment, with an Eastern, not other, slant [i.e., not the Western slant favored by Ben-Gurion], because after the war years it is from the East [East European countries] that the main wave of immigration will come, and it is there that an ardent desire for emigration exists. I say this taking into account that *aliyah* is the main issue in our foreign policy in the East [Eastern Europe].³²

After this clash between Barzilai and the prime minister, it is not surprising that the former noisily resigned his post a few months later.³³

The emphasis on the emigration of Polish Jewry to Israel was a constant theme throughout the period discussed here. Even the Polish ban on Jewish emigration to Israel between 1951 and 1956 did not change the Israeli policy of promoting and encouraging Jewish emigration. The issue was raised – and not always in diplomatic tones – in numerous meetings throughout the first half of the 1950s. As in a fixed ritual, the Israeli

side requested, demanded, insisted that Poland allow emigration, on the basis of endless pretexts and reasons, and the Polish side cited the negligible number of potential emigrants. Poland depicted the Israeli insistence on Jewish emigration as interference in internal Polish affairs. According to the Polish understanding of international relations and international law, Israel could not legitimately claim the right to protect its ethnic co-nationals who lived in Poland and held Polish citizenship. In this context the triadic nexus became extremely conflictual: in public, both countries portrayed the Polish Jews exclusively as Polish citizens. However, behind the scenes, both countries often emphasized the Polish Jews' national link to Jews outside Poland – especially in Israel. In opposition to Poland's overt characteristic assertion that the status of the Jewish minority in Poland was a strictly internal matter, Israeli ethnopolitical conceptions regarded its right and responsibilities vis-à-vis Jewish kin as transcending the boundaries of territory and citizenship. Inevitably, a clash between the two states arose over whether and how Israel should be a homeland for the Polish Jews in Poland.

In the second half of the 1950s a huge wave of emigration began, reaching its peak in 1957 when 31,619 Jews emigrated to Israel.³⁴ It was a result of deep changes in Poland. First and foremost, the post-Stalin “Thaw” in Poland after the so-called “Polish October” – the events that brought the reformist Władysław Gomułka back to power – led to a certain liberalization of Polish society. However, the climate that accompanied the Thaw in Poland brought, too, a huge wave of anti-Semitism.³⁵ When Polish policy toward Jewish emigration changed, permitting broad segments of the Jewish population to emigrate on “humanitarian” grounds, Katriel Katz, the Israeli minister in Warsaw, declared that “Expediting *aliyah* remains our most urgent task.”³⁶ Israel saw the easing of restrictions on Jewish emigration as a propitious occasion for bringing the Polish Jewish community to Israel, and the Israeli legion in Warsaw did its best to achieve this. The triadic nexus took on a new dynamic. Israel could achieve its nation-building goals through the immigration of a desired and assimilable element, while Poland could achieve a more homogenous ethnonational identity by allowing the emigration of non-ethnic Polish citizens. Polish Jewry changed as well, in both numbers and social composition. Most of its leaders, as in a Greek tragedy, struggled against Polish Communist ethnonationalist conceptions of citizenship that regarded non-ethnic Poles as “others” and demanded overt and vigorous actions and reactions against anti-Semitism. At the same time, they tried to assuage the widespread panic among Jews and even sought to limit Jewish emigration to Israel.³⁷

After the large wave of emigration of the second half of the 1950s, estimated at 48,381, the number of Jews in Poland diminished drastically. In October 1960, the Israeli legion in Warsaw estimated that 24,260 Jews remained in Poland.³⁸ Nonetheless, its main goal did not change. As Rehavam Amir, the Israeli chargé d'affaires in the late 1950s and early 1960s, explicitly stated when analyzing the bilateral relations: “The one and only factor . . . in our relations with Poland is the *aliyah of the remaining Jews*. Every request, every reaction, every remark from our side should be considered in the context of its impact on the *aliyah* question.” This was one of many such remarks. On another occasion he said: “What are our aims in Poland? . . . First and foremost, to solve the question of the liquidation of this diaspora community.”³⁹ All other issues were subordinated to it.

Despite such statements, Jewish emigration was not the only topic on the bilateral agenda, which included other important issues such as economic relations, ties through Poland with other states in the Soviet bloc (especially the Soviet Union), and cultural exchanges. However, the emigration agenda often dictated the handling of these other issues.

For example, Israel was ready to sacrifice some of its economic interests in order to promote Jewish emigration from Poland. When Poland banned emigration in the early 1950s, the Israeli legation attempted to link economic agreements with *aliyah*. Israel offered large payments for Polish goods in hard currency in exchange for Polish consent to Jewish emigration.⁴⁰ But this method, though successful in Romania, did not work in this case. The Polish government rejected the idea, labeling such a transaction immoral – as if it were more moral to prevent people from emigrating if they wanted to do so.⁴¹ We can understand this policy only in the context of the triadic nexus: Israel preferred to perceive the Jews as its potential citizens because they were co-nationals, whereas Poland considered them as co-citizens, so that the Israeli offer was seen as interference in internal Polish affairs. Later, when the Polish state unilaterally changed the terms of transactions involving services rendered by the Israeli aeronautics industry in the early 1960s (the “Bedeck question,” a very delicate issue due to the Cold War), Israel did not react harshly for fear of harming emigration to Israel.⁴²

In the 1960s a new issue arose: Poland’s payment of pensions to Polish citizens who had moved to Israel.⁴³ From a legal point of view, Israel invoked international agreements as well as natural justice. However, behind these issues was the aim of encouraging *aliyah* and putting an end to the Jewish presence on Polish soil: “How can we increase the number of Jewish immigrants?” asked an annual report in 1964: “The question of the pensions: . . . it is plausible that the resolution of such a question by negotiations between the State of Israel and the Polish authorities will lead to the immigration of a large number of families, and we are very interested in this.”⁴⁴ Israel repeatedly brought up the pension issue despite the risk of adversely affecting the fragile bilateral ties.⁴⁵

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, when Poland did allow Jewish emigration, the Israeli policy was to tolerate Polish criticism of Israel, which was often offensive or provocative, so as not to jeopardize *aliyah*. When Dov Sattath, the Israeli minister in Warsaw, wanted to respond harshly to accusations of the legation’s interference in internal Polish affairs (at that time the legation provided varying kinds of support to much of Polish Jewry), his superiors ordered him to abstain from any firm measures because “the continuation of correct relations with Poland and the continuation of *aliyah* are more important than any formalistic behavior.”⁴⁶ Rehavam Amir, the Israeli minister in Warsaw in the late 1950s and early 1960s, wrote to his superior in Jerusalem: “I would like to stress that on more than one occasion in the context of our [diplomatic] relations I have felt the need to react severely and firmly, and on every occasion I have had to restrain myself because it could have interfered with achieving our main goal” – the *aliyah* of the remaining Jews in Poland. Until what he termed as the “liquidation of the Jewish diaspora in Poland,” Israel could not afford to defend its own honor.⁴⁷

Even cultural ties, which were an important means of maintaining contact with the local Jewish population, were often subordinated to the “Jewish” agenda.⁴⁸ Even during the Stalinist era, Israel tried to maintain some cultural connection with the Jewish religious community and was relatively open about these activities.⁴⁹ In the late 1950s and early 1960s, when bilateral relations improved, Israel sought to expand these cultural ties.⁵⁰ Despite the risk to the quality of bilateral relations, Israeli diplomats encouraged the study of Hebrew and Jewish history and maintained ties with Jewish cultural institutions (including leading figures in the Jewish theater).⁵¹ Sometimes, the Polish side viewed these cultural activities as something positive – a safety valve for the limited relations – rather than as an agent in reinforcing Polish Jews’ ties with Israel.⁵² The Israeli diplomats proposed a long series of cultural exchanges so that it would be possible to bring cultural figures from Israel to Poland.⁵³ The Israeli approach to cultural ties with Eastern Europe

was summed up by Foreign Minister Abba Eban in a report to the Israeli government on his trip to Warsaw in 1966: "The issue of cultural exchange is of vital importance. . . . [Bringing an Israeli] fiddler or pianist, a writer, a painter, an artist [is important] in such places where the Jews [are living] . . . thus [cultural exchanges] are of the highest significance."⁵⁴

However, Israeli policy vis-à-vis the Jewish question in Poland posed diverse dilemmas. How involved should Israel be in spreading Jewish culture, and what kind of Jewish content should it disseminate? Should Polish Jewry be given material support by Israeli agencies or should Israel recruit Western Jewry to provide such support? If the latter, to what extent? How vehemently should Israel express its concerns about anti-Semitic incidents? To what extent should Israel involve world Jewry in what was going on among Polish Jewry? How and to what extent should Israel try to influence the Polish Jewish leadership? How could the anti-Zionist attitude of the Jewish communist leadership be neutralized? And finally: to what extent were the interests of local Jewry identical to Israel's interests?

These dilemmas were especially salient in the late 1950s when mounting anti-Semitism led to an increase in emigration. Moshe Avidan, the Israeli chargé d'affaires in Warsaw in June 1956, explained in a telegram to the Israeli Foreign Ministry why caution was recommended in reacting to instances of Polish anti-Semitism at this sensitive time:

Please, consider carefully if publishing in the Israeli or the Western press about the anti-Semitism is worthwhile. The reasons pro and con: pro, perhaps it will motivate the [Polish] government to implement vigorous measures to combat the anti-Semitism. Con, the publication might harm chances of *aliyah*. The Polish government would not want to admit that it is unable or unwilling to terminate the persecution of the Jews and it will fear that a flow of Jewish immigration will be interpreted as such.⁵⁵

Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir explicitly asked the editors of Israeli newspapers not to report on anti-Semitism in Poland or to express overt criticism of the Polish government. She emphasized the importance of friendly relations with Poland and the need "to avoid exaggerated unilateral criticism in order to maintain the flow of *aliyah*,"⁵⁶ believing that *aliyah* was the best way to save the Jews from anti-Semitism.

The reluctance to condemn Polish anti-Semitism reflected the paramount importance attributed to *aliyah* with regard to Jewish survival compared with the threat posed by anti-Semitism. The tension between Israel's interests (as understood by the Israeli diplomats appointed to deal with Polish Jewry) and the economic or social interests of the Jews in Poland is particularly salient in the context of support from Jewish institutions in the West. For instance, although the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Jewish educational and vocational training organization ORT were regarded as important agents in supporting Jewish life in Poland and were praised for doing so, they were also criticized for helping to maintain diaspora life in Poland. Such ambivalence is evident in an annual report on the situation of Polish Jewry in 1964, written by the Israeli diplomats appointed to maintain ties with the Jews of Poland: "What is the purpose of such assistance? Toward what Jewish aims are they working? Does the Jewish people have the right to support indiscriminately activities that, due to objective circumstances, will lead to assimilation and auto-liquidation when another option exists, the option of *aliyah*?"⁵⁷

On another level, Israel considered Poland the best East European channel for improving relations with the Soviet Union. On several occasions in the 1950s and 1960s, Israeli diplomats asked Polish diplomats to mediate between Israel and the Soviets. Poland, for instance, mediated in 1953 between Israel and the Soviet Union in order to renew diplomatic relations after the Soviets severed them.⁵⁸ However, the triadic nexus

existed in this context, too. Sometimes the Polish mediators told the Israelis: “Eliminate the crucial obstacle, the focus on the issue of Soviet Jewry”;⁵⁹ or “Stop describing the Soviet Union as anti-Semitic. . . . There will be no improvement unless you stop this”; or “If you want to improve relations, stop pressing this issue.” According to Abba Eban, such statements must have been made with Soviet approval.⁶⁰ The Israeli government refused to change its policy on Soviet Jewry even though a change could have been beneficial in the international arena.

The Israeli legation’s special interest in the local Jewish population often led to clashes and diplomatic incidents, some public, some behind the scenes. Against Israel’s claims of transborder responsibility, Poland asserted that the status of the Jewish minority in Poland was a strictly internal affair. Nevertheless, Israel understood that it was dealing with foreign citizens, while the Polish authorities did not stop treating the Jewish population as ethnonational aliens transnationally related to non-Polish citizens.⁶¹ Often Israeli diplomats associated with Nativ (the branch of the Israeli secret service dealing with East European Jewry) were declared *persona non grata* because of their activities among Polish Jewry.⁶²

The Polish complaints about Israeli interference in internal Polish affairs and activities “leading to Jewish identification with Israel” reached the Israeli foreign minister.⁶³ High-ranking Israeli diplomats were told by the Polish Ministry of Foreign affairs on more than one occasion: “It would also help to improve our relations if, in your consular activities in general, you would draw a clear line between Israeli citizens and others.”⁶⁴ Often the dilemma of improving relations by breaking the triadic nexus or risking the relations by reinforcing it was resolved in favor of the second option.

The central goal of Israeli diplomacy in Poland in the two decades after 1948 was to overcome the discrepancy between ethnocultural and ethnopolitical boundaries, an imperative in the nation-building process according to the logic of ethnonationalism. Indeed, a variety of interests were subordinated to this goal. The two other parts of the triadic nexus also had to relate to this logic. Throughout the period discussed here, the Polish state did not stop treating its Jewish population as a kind of ethnonational “other” among “us” (Polish citizens), excessively tied to a foreign country and therefore suspected of not being “patriotic” enough.⁶⁵ The ethnonational logic in the Polish nation-building process led to permitting Jewish emigration, thereby changing the very composition of Polish society through ethnic homogenization. The third element, local Jewry and its leadership, was also affected, as it was caught increasingly in the contradiction between the ethnonational logic of nation building and a shrinking civic-minded conception of nation building. Emigration reduced the numbers of the Jewish minority and thus hampered the continuation of Jewish cultural life in Poland as well.⁶⁶

“Our” memory, “foreign” memory

“Only after the resolution of the question of *aliyah* from Poland should our relations normalize,” Amir stated in 1960, when the number of Jews in Poland had dropped considerably due to emigration, mainly to Israel.⁶⁷ But was this indeed the case? On the one hand, as the Jewish population in Poland diminished, the issue of Jewish emigration naturally became less salient; on the other hand, the issue did not disappear and bilateral relations did not “normalize” (according to Amir’s interpretation of “normal”), but rather were reshaped, becoming increasingly tied to Holocaust remembrance. Indeed, the bilateral relations during the two decades described here were constantly under the shadow of the Holocaust. The omnipresent memory of the Holocaust in Poland for the Israelis was

summed up by a diplomat stationed in Poland in a personal letter in the mid-1960s: "It's interesting how Poland affects you. Before coming [here], I felt distant from the subject of the Holocaust. Now I'm living the subject insofar as the concept of 'living' is at all appropriate."⁶⁸

The contested character of Holocaust memory was expressed annually around the commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt. References to the role of Zionists in the revolt and the participation of an Israeli delegation in the ceremonies were a kind of barometer of the relations between the two states.⁶⁹ However, the main bone of contention concerned who had the right to shape that memory. As in the case of its ties with Polish Jewry, Israel repeatedly claimed the right to be involved in shaping the memory of the Holocaust in Poland. For Israel the Jewish memory transcended boundaries of territory and citizenship. In this sense, Israel as a "homeland" was an ethnopolitical category, not a geopolitical one. Israeli diplomats in Poland asserted that this shared nationhood made Israel not only responsible to some extent for its own citizens and Jewish co-nationals living in Poland but also for the Jewish memory there. And this memory not only intertwined the three elements of the triadic relationship but even affected the right of each of them to shape it.

Probably the best example of this complicated triadic nexus arose around the issue of the right of each of the three elements to design the monument at Auschwitz. In 1959 the Polish authorities accepted the International Auschwitz Committee's initiative for national pavilions at Auschwitz, to be established by countries whose nationals had perished in the camp.⁷⁰ But it was not clear who was entitled to erect a Jewish pavilion depicting the brutal suffering and death of the majority of the victims.⁷¹ At first, the professional rank in the Israeli Foreign Ministry expressed no interest in the project, but it changed its mind under pressure from organizations of Polish Jews in Israel and the World Federation of Polish Jewry.⁷² This pressure began shortly after the start of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961, which brought the Holocaust to Israeli public consciousness, beginning a process that transformed it into an essential component of Israeli identity.⁷³ The social climate surrounding the Eichmann trial probably heightened the interest of high-ranking Foreign Ministry officials in the issue of Holocaust commemoration. They were aware of the diplomatic consequences, even *vis-à-vis* the Polish state.⁷⁴ From the Israeli point of view, it was only natural for Israel to erect a pavilion dedicated to the Jews killed in Auschwitz-Birkenau, not because Israel represented world Jewry, but because most survivors of the camp lived in Israel and because Israel was the national home of the Jewish people.⁷⁵ The International Auschwitz Committee, meeting in Budapest in December 1962, unanimously approved the establishment of an Israeli pavilion.⁷⁶ Although the professional diplomats in the ministry did not enthusiastically support the idea, the political echelon, especially Foreign Minister Golda Meir, insisted on its importance. Even when the difficulties seemed insurmountable, she did not give up; instead she encouraged the diplomatic echelon to become involved and to insist on carrying out the project.⁷⁷

Several leading figures in the Polish government (such as Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki and Deputy Culture Minister Kazimierz Rusinek) supported the idea of an Israeli pavilion alongside other pavilions erected by countries whose citizens had perished in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Rusinek even told Avigdor Dagan, the Israeli representative in Warsaw, when it was not yet clear if Israel would take part in the enterprise, "It will be good and right if an Israeli pavilion is erected."⁷⁸ In Poland, however, the Israeli pavilion was a contested issue. Rusinek (supported by Rapacki) could not get the proposition passed.⁷⁹ The Polish government rejected Israeli participation and transmitted this decision to the Israeli ambassador.⁸⁰ The Jews, who had suffered and been murdered

in Auschwitz-Birkenau more than any other nation, were Polish citizens, the government said, and their sufferings would be represented in the Polish pavilion. The annihilation of Jews from other countries would be represented in each of the other national pavilions. The State of Israel was created after the war and there was no reason for an Israeli pavilion since no Israeli citizen had perished there; moreover, the government claimed, Israel did not represent the Jewish people as a whole.⁸¹ This was a manipulative justification for a number of reasons: most Polish Jews had been murdered in Treblinka, Majdanek, and Bełżec and not in Auschwitz; moreover Israel had said beforehand that it did not represent world Jewry per se, even though most of the survivors of the camp lived in Israel; and finally, another state that had been established after the war, East Germany, did receive a pavilion.⁸²

The Polish decision provoked consternation among the Israelis. According to Dov Sattath, the resolution had been passed mainly due to pressure from the Soviet Union. However, other factors were probably involved, too: infighting between factions within the party; early signs of “anti-Zionist” agitation in various Polish government circles and institutions, including the Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (ZBoWiD), led by Mieczysław Moczar; and the stance of the TSKŻ, the Jewish social and cultural association.⁸³

Indeed, the third part of the triadic nexus – Polish Jewry as organized in the TSKŻ – played a central role in the struggle over the right to shape the memory of the Holocaust. The TSKŻ denied Israel’s right to dictate how the Holocaust should be remembered on Polish soil. Formally, the leaders of the TSKŻ did not recognize Israel or its representatives in Poland as having any special status.⁸⁴ The TSKŻ considered itself the representative of Polish Jewry and believed that as such it had the right to erect a Jewish exposition in the Polish pavilion instead of having Polish Jewry memorialized in an Israeli pavilion or a Jewish pavilion erected by Israel according to Israeli conceptions. The TSKŻ demanded the right to shape the memory of the Holocaust in accordance with its own ideology. Clashes between the TSKŻ and Israeli representatives were therefore frequent and prominent, especially in ceremonies commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.⁸⁵ In addition, the TSKŻ’s reduced access to the centers of power may have prompted its insistence on being involved in erecting the pavilion and blocking Israeli participation, in an attempt to strengthen its own position.⁸⁶ Rusinek even told the Israeli ambassador in undiplomatic and revealing terms that the TSKŻ “gang” had addressed the Politburo in an attempt to prevent an Israeli pavilion and erect a “Jewish” pavilion instead. Rusinek was opposed to allowing the TSKŻ to erect it.⁸⁷

Moshe Avidan, the Israeli ambassador to Poland at the time, asserted: “If the Poles do not offer us the pavilion with good grace, it would be better not to press them and to completely renounce it. Unlike many of my friends, I think that the entire Oświęcim [Auschwitz] camp is a monument to the Jewish Shoah, so the erection of a Jewish pavilion that is supposed to represent the Jewish issue would paradoxically diminish it.”⁸⁸ Avidan’s proposal was not accepted. Despite long deliberations among Foreign Ministry officials, some of whom accepted Avidan’s premise, Foreign Minister Golda Meir instructed the Israeli representatives to persuade the Poles to agree to an Israeli pavilion.⁸⁹ Israeli diplomacy was enlisted to promote the goal of enabling Israel to shape the memory of the Holocaust in accordance with its own conceptions.

As noted, Rusinek believed that an Israeli pavilion was desirable, and the International Auschwitz Committee approved the idea. A refusal to let Israel participate would be interpreted as discriminatory. Moreover, consent would resolve the question of who should erect the pavilion. Israel, it seems, was the best of several undesirable agents such

as the JDC and the World Jewish Congress, while, according to Rusinek, the TSKŻ had no money.⁹⁰

The triadic nexus was now joined by a fourth element, which was connected to the local Jewish leadership as well as to Israeli government agencies: organized world Jewry, which tried to influence the Polish government. Alexander Easterman, a leading figure in the World Jewish Congress, paid a visit to Deputy Foreign Minister Józef Winiewicz in April 1963 at which he protested the Polish government's refusal to include a specifically Jewish pavilion in its scheme for memorial pavilions to be erected by governments (France, the Netherlands, East Germany, and others) commemorating their nationals murdered at Auschwitz. In his long and somewhat impassioned criticism, Easterman noted that even though the overwhelming majority of victims at Auschwitz had been Jews, "the Polish Government had rejected a proposal that the Israel Government would erect a Jewish Pavilion." Speaking on behalf of world Jewry, Easterman urged

that the Polish government should consider the sense of deepest indignation which will inevitably rise throughout world Jewry if the Government persisted in excluding a distinctive Jewish memorial building from its plans, because not only were Jews the overwhelming majority of the millions destroyed at Auschwitz, but the very name, Auschwitz, had become the symbol of the whole tragic martyrdom of the six million European Jews annihilated by the Nazis.

Referring to the formalistic reason that Israel had not existed at the time, he said: "Political and technical considerations have no place in any commemoration of the Jewish martyrs of Auschwitz or elsewhere. The essential issue was that the Jewish martyrdom was *sui generis* in the whole sordid story of Nazi savagery and must not be obscured."⁹¹ According to Easterman's report to Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir, Winiewicz "without replying . . . picked up the telephone and spoke for several minutes to someone in Polish. When he had finished he said to me 'You will have the Jewish Pavilion; the plans will be worked out in this ministry, under the direction of the man with whom I have just been speaking.'"⁹² Easterman regarded the answer as an achievement. Stefan Grajek, a leading figure in the world organization of Jewish combatants and partisans, was given a similar answer two years later.⁹³

However, the Israeli Foreign Ministry considered such proposals insufficient because they did not explicitly call for Israel to do the job. There was still the possibility that the Polish government would build a Jewish pavilion independently in order – as the Israeli ambassador put it – "to falsify and to adapt all [the events of the Holocaust] to their political conceptions. Or more accurately, those of the Soviets, who are working behind the scenes"⁹⁴ People in both Israeli Holocaust museums (Yad Vashem and the Ghetto Fighters' House) voiced their disapproval of obscuring the Jewish identity of the victims behind the mask of citizenship.⁹⁵ As Sattath noted, "our explanations that Hitler did not make any legal differentiation regarding the citizenship of the Jews, that he did not care if they were Dutch citizens, French, Czechoslovakians or whatever, did not help at all."⁹⁶

Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, proposed creating a world committee of Jewish experts and personalities as an advisory board on the establishment of the Jewish pavilion.⁹⁷ The Israeli authorities accepted a compromise: the Jewish pavilion would be erected by a commission comprising people from the ŻIH (the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw), Yad Vashem, and others, in an institutional nexus connecting Israel, Poland, and Polish Jewry.⁹⁸ To the Israelis, this compromise made it possible to secure "our status when determining the character of the site."⁹⁹ However, Yad Vashem served mainly as the source of material and not as an equal partner in planning the pavilion; this provoked renewed tension around the construction of the memory.¹⁰⁰ The tension did not

cease even when diplomatic relations between the two states were severed in the wake of the June 1967 war and the Jewish pavilion was opened; it lasted even after the peak of the anti-Jewish campaign in spring 1968.¹⁰¹

The Eichmann trial triggered a new dynamic in the triadic nexus regarding the struggle over Holocaust remembrance. As Hanna Yablonska points out, as a result of the Eichmann trial the Israeli educational system “discovered” the Holocaust as a means of connecting Israeli youth to their Jewish heritage.¹⁰² As mentioned above, Holocaust remembrance in Israel was closely related to Poland, which was considered a “natural” setting for shaping the memory of the Holocaust among Israeli and diaspora Jews. Indeed, the first initiatives for student “pilgrimages” were proposed in 1963 as a way of promoting Holocaust remembrance among Israeli youth as the heirs of East European Jewry in general and Polish Jewry in particular. In early 1965, the Israeli Ministry of Education even considered the possibility of a massive pilgrimage of Jews from Israel and other countries to the extermination camps. It requested assistance from the Foreign Ministry, which eagerly complied. The first organized trip by Israeli youth to Poland took place that year.¹⁰³ In the summer of 1966, a second group made the pilgrimage. This was a group of students from a teachers’ college, whose three-week tour took them to the main Holocaust-related sites and addressed the history of Polish Jewry; participants met with local Jews, both survivors and young people.¹⁰⁴ Although the Education Ministry intended to continue the project, the rupture of diplomatic relations froze it for three decades.¹⁰⁵

This new Israeli civic ritual, which became a kind of rite of passage, reshaped the triadic nexus. The Polish authorities were reluctant to allow such a project, as it could present an undesirable image of Poland, while the Israeli diplomats insisted on the public presentation of positive impressions in order to minimize the Polish lack of enthusiasm.¹⁰⁶ The Israeli Ministry of Education tried to arrange encounters between Israeli youth and local Jewish youth, probably believing that such contacts would deepen the Jewish identity of the Israelis while creating Jewish national awareness among Jewish youth in Poland, in both cases promoting Zionist goals.¹⁰⁷ The TSKŻ avoided such encounters in the belief that they might thwart its attempts to maintain Jewish life in the Polish People’s Republic.¹⁰⁸

This new dynamic of the triadic nexus altered relations between the two states and Polish Jewry and thus their attitudes toward the Holocaust and its commemoration. As in the earlier period, with regard to the Jews who remained in Poland, the memory of the Holocaust engendered a new wave of confrontation. On the one hand, the Israeli Foreign Ministry, as a branch of the ethnonational Jewish state, considered itself entitled to shape the memory of the Holocaust. On the other hand, it understood its limitations because it was acting on foreign soil. The Polish authorities were immersed in a similar contradiction: on the one hand, the monuments were situated on its sovereign territory; on the other hand, they could not have exclusive control over their character because of the victims’ Jewish, and thus foreign, ethnonational identity. The leaders of Polish Jewry regarded the memory as belonging to the local Jews and considered themselves entitled to shape it, but they realized that most surviving Polish Jews had opted to rebuild their lives abroad. Moreover, a “Jewish” monument kept the connection to transnational Jewry, in Israel and elsewhere, alive for them.

Conclusion

A central aspect of Israeli-Polish relations before 1967 was their tripartite nature, involving the two states and Polish Jewry. Here I have concentrated on the importance

ascribed by Israel to Polish Jewry, especially Jewish emigration to Israel and later commemorations of the Jewish past on Polish soil. It was a contested field of relations. Countering Israel's claims of transborder responsibility, Poland asserted that the status of the Jewish minority in Poland was a strictly internal matter. Nonetheless, Israel accepted that it was dealing with foreign citizens, and the Polish authorities continued treating the Jewish population as ethnonational aliens transnationally related to non-Polish citizens. Israeli diplomacy, faced with the dilemma of improving relations by breaking the triadic nexus or risking the relations by reinforcing the triadic nexus, often chose the second option. The ongoing efforts of Israeli diplomats in the two decades after 1948 that sought to end the discrepancy between ethnocultural and ethnopolitical boundaries subordinated a variety of interests to this central goal.

The three elements of the nexus influenced one another through their policy or behavior, monitored each other, interpreted each other's actions, and reacted accordingly. For instance, *aliyah* from Poland engendered a new dynamic in the triadic nexus. Israel was able to implement its nation-building policy through the immigration of a desired and assimilable element. The Polish authorities, by allowing emigration of an unassimilable ethnonational Jewish element, homogenized the nationalizing Polish state. Polish Jewry changed, too, decreasing in numbers.

After the massive emigration of the Jews, another issue emerged that connected and reshaped the three elements: the competition to represent the memory of what was now a tiny minority of the Polish population, Polish Jewry. This competition even brought a fourth element into the relationship: organized world Jewry. Indeed, the triadic nexus had a constant impact on relations between Poland and Israel. Even today it remains an important factor in these relations.

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Notes

1. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, esp. 55–76. Yfaat Weiss used such a conceptualization regarding Israel, Eastern Europe (especially Poland), and East European Jewry to analyze the enactment of the Israeli Law of Return. See Weiss, "Ha-golem ve-yotzro," 45–69.
2. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 4–5.
3. Berendt, *Życie Żydowskie w Polsce*, 49–50, 56–57; Adelson, "W Polsce zwanej Ludową," 428, 433, 465–66, 469, 471–72, 476–77; Grabski, "Sytuacja Żydów w Polsce w latach 1950–1957," 504–14; Grabski, *Działalność komunistów*, 301–10, 319–27. See also Kichelewski, "A Community under Pressure," 173–78.
4. Szaynok, "Problematyka żydowska," 18–19. Especially revealing on the subject of the regime's suspicion of the Jewish population is a memo from Jacek Sosnowski, director of Department III, Division III of the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs, 18 July 1965, Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw (hereafter AIPN), 00231/229 t. 30 (document 384). (The main documents cited here are published in Hebrew in *Te'udot le-yahasei Yisrael Polin* and in Polish in *Stosunki Polsko Izraelskie*. The document number in parentheses refers to its number in these collections.)
5. Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, 141.
6. *Ibid.*, 141. See also, e.g., "Instrukcja nr 1 w sprawie rozpracowania Izraela" (Instruction no. 1 on gathering information on Israel), 7 October 1950, AIPN, 00231/102 t. 2 (document 148).
7. Kichelewski, "A Community under Pressure," 173–76, 182–83.

8. See, e.g., Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwą w tle*, 165–72, 210; see also Sosnowski's memo of 18 July 1965 (n. 4 above), according to which most Jewish institutions and their leaders are suspected of Jewish nationalism and Zionism.
9. See, for example, the resolutions of the Conference of the Jewish Activists of PPR in 1946 and 1948 in Zachariash and Mark, *PPR in kamf un boy*, 203–8, 269–77; and the resolutions of the board of TSKŻ in Tarnów and Łódź, 5 October 1956 and 29 October 1956, in Cała and Datner-Śpiewak, *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce 1944–1968*, 147–49; the works of Naftali Herts Kon, examined in Karen Auerbach, "The fate of a Yiddish Poet," 257–64; "Unzer Vort," *Folks-shime*, no. 1, 22 February 1946, reprinted in Zachariash and Mark, *PPR in kamf un boy*, 190–91; Sfarid, *Mit zikh un mit andere*; Smoliar, *Oyf der letster pozitsye*.
10. I have used the methodology of discourse analysis in examining these texts. See van Dijk, *Discourse as Social Interaction* and idem, *Discourse as Structure and Process*.
11. Schatz, *The Generation*, 277–83, 324–25, 343–49, 366; Berendt, *Życie Żydowskie w Polsce*, 123–34, 242–43, 265; Grabski, "Działalność Frakcji PPR w CKŻP," 31–32, 54–56, 72–74, 78–84, 94–96; Smoliar, *Oyf der letster pozitsye*, 335; Sfarid, *Mit zikh un mit andere*, 248–49, 276. See also Shore, "Children of Revolution," 63–65; and Kichelewski, "A Community under Pressure," 168–73.
12. Milosz, "Anti-Semitism in Poland," 40.
13. Minutes of the first meeting of Israeli diplomats, 17–23 July 1950, Israel State Archives (hereafter ISA), 130.02/2384/15. See also Oren, "Tzirut Yisrael be-Varshah," 98–102 (Hebrew pagination).
14. Oren, "Tzirut Yisrael be-Varsha," 90–91 (Hebrew pagination).
15. Stankowski, "Poland and Israel," 7–11; Chajm, "Stosunek rząd Polskich do powstania siedziby narodowej," 356–73; Oren, "Pe'ilut ha-mishlahat ha-polanit," 281–411; Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwą w tle*, 79–119.
16. Smoliar, *Oyf der letster pozitsye*, 124–29; Szaynok, *Ludność żydowska na dolnym śląsku*, 164–66; Aleksium, *Dokąd dalej?* 205–6; Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwą w tle*, 111–16.
17. Engel, *Bein shihzur li-vrihah*; Oren, "Retzifut u-temurot," 25–37.
18. Stankowski, "Nowe spojrzenie," 110, 112.
19. Berendt, *Życie Żydowskie w Polsce*, 92.
20. Report of Israel Barzilai, 1 June 1949, ISA, 130.11/2514/3 (document 107).
21. Report of the head of Section IV, Department I MBP, Wejnfeld, 27 October 1949, AIPN, 00231/102 t-1 (document 77).
22. See, for instance, Israel Barzilai's personal diary, notes of 9 October and 16 November 1948, on his meetings with Jakób Beran, Hashomer Hatzat'ir Archives, Givat Haviva, I. Barzilai Files, 15-95-2-4 (documents 74 and 80); Israel Barzilai to Moshe Sharett, 12 February 1949, ISA, 130.11/2492/20 (document 94); Israel Barzilai to Shmuel Friedman, 1 April 1949, ISA, 130.02/2457/18 (document 98); Israel Barzilai to Moshe Sharett, 9 August 1949, ISA, 130.11/2502/10 (document 110).
23. Minutes of the meeting of the PZPR Central Committee, 4 August 1949 (document 109).
24. Stenographic record of government meeting no. 38/5709, 20 September 1949, ISA. The proposal of positive discrimination in favor of Polish Jewry was rejected due to a great deal of opposition, partly from Golda Meir and Ben-Gurion, who refused to take part in any such discrimination. It should be noted that Ben-Gurion initially agreed with Yitzhak Gruenbaum, a former interior minister and a leading figure among Jewish emigrants from Poland, that Polish immigrants should be given special attention, and even a special budget. Later he decided that this would be a mistake. He wrote to Gruenbaum that "we must not discriminate in any way among immigrants, and there are no grounds for giving Polish immigrants any advantage. Whoever doesn't want to come shouldn't come. Immigrants to Israel are not doing Israel a favor, and we must not spend on one immigrant what we can spend on two" (Ben-Gurion to Gruenbaum, 28 March 1950, ISA, 130.43/5556/9). Sharett was also persuaded that it would be wrong to discriminate in favor of Polish immigrants. See Sharett to Barzilai, 12 October 1949, Hashomer Hatzat'ir Archives, Givat Haviva, I. Barzilai Files, 15-95-2-4, box 2, file 4 (document 120).
25. Cable from Eliashiv to Sharett, 14 September 1949, ISA, 130.09/2306/4; Silber, "Immigrants from Poland Want to Go Back," 201–19.
26. On the importance of this ethnic element in nation building in Israel, including legislative aspects, see Weiss, "Ha-golem ve-yotzro," 45–69, especially 51–52.

27. Minutes of the meeting of the PZPR Central Committee, 4 August 1949 (document 109); and Pinchas Dagan to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, 18 August 1949, ISA, 130.11/2502/10 (document 113); Szynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, 183.
28. Szynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, 182, 195–96, 198–99.
29. Sharett (Tel Aviv) to members of the government (Tel Aviv), 19 September 1949, ISA, 93.43/5556/9 (document 117). See also stenographic record of government meeting no. 38/5709, 20 September 1949, ISA.
30. Stankowski, “Nowe spojrzenie,” 117; Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, 203.
31. Śluczański to Wierbłowski, 25 May 1951, Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych (Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Warsaw (hereafter AMSZ), z-11 w-19 t-336, (document 159). See also Stankowski, “Nowe spojrzenie,” 117. Possibly the large number of emigrants who did not register profession reflects traders, shopkeepers, and other “undesirable bourgeois” elements.
32. Minutes of the first meeting of Israeli diplomats, 17–23 July 1950, ISA, 130.02/2384/15.
33. Barzilai to Sharett, 2 November 1950, ISA, 130.02/2446/11 (document 152). On Barzilai’s activities as Israeli minister in Warsaw, especially regarding *aliyah* and relations with the local Jews, as well as the circumstances surrounding his resignation, see Oren, “Tzirut Yisrael be-Varshah.”
34. “The Jews in Poland,” report prepared in December 1962, Yad Tabenkin Archives, Ramat Efal (hereafter YTA), group 15, box 32, file 5, document 6.
35. Machcewicz, “Antisemitism in Poland in 1956,” 170–83; Berendt, *Życie Żydowskie w Polsce*, 291–312; Kichelewski, “A Community under Pressure,” 161–62.
36. Katz to Eastern Europe Division, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter EED), 10 February 1957, Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem (hereafter CZA), S6/6027. See also Szynok, *Z Historią i Moskwą w tle*, 283–91; Berendt, *Życie Żydowskie w Polsce*, 327–34.
37. Berendt, *Życie Żydowskie w Polsce*, 291–334; Smoliar, *Oyf der letster pozitsye*, 279–82, 306–7, 310–24, 332–33. See also Sfarid, *Mit zikh un mit andere*, 190–91, 200–201, 206–10, 217–224.
38. “Data on the situation of the Jews in Poland,” 1 October 1964, YTA, group 15, box 32, file 5, document 6. According to annual reports prepared by Israeli diplomats in Poland, between 1957 and 1960, 44,389 people emigrated to Israel. “The Jews in Poland,” report prepared in December 1962, YTA, group 15, box 32, file 5, document 9. In 1956, 4,002 emigrated. Victor Reshef to EED, 6 November 1957 (document 260).
39. Amir to Avigdor Dagan, 14 November 1960, ISA, 130.23/3336/33 (document 323) (emphasis in the original); Amir to Yaakov Shimoni, 17 May 1959, ISA, 130.23/3118/4 (document 295).
40. Moshe Bartor, director of Economic Division, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Arieh Levavi, deputy director of Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15 and 17 February 1954, ISA, 130.09/2306/6 (document 204); EED to Israeli legation in Warsaw, 28 November 1954, ISA, 130.09/2306/1–3 (document 212); Nativ director Shaul Avigur to Sharett, 26 May 1955, ISA, 130.11/2502/12 (document 219). See also, e.g., Dov Sattath to the Warsaw legation, 31 January 1952, ISA 93.07/507/12; Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, 257–58.
41. Overview by Ambassador Dov Sattath, at a conference in Warsaw of Israeli ministers in Eastern Europe, 11–16 May 1966, ISA, 130.23/4054/19 (document 395).
42. Rehavam Amir to Avigdor Dagan, 14 November 1960, ISA, 130.23/3336/33 (document 323). For the “Bedek” issue, see cables to the Israeli legation in Warsaw from the Economic Department in the Israeli Foreign Ministry, 17 and 27 July 1960, 29 September, 10 October, and 12 December 1960, ISA, 130.9/2307/7. See also Zdzisław Regulski, Polish commercial attaché in Tel Aviv, to M. Alon, director of the Economic Department, Israeli Foreign Ministry, 17 September 1964, ISA, 130.6/3152/7.
43. Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, 362.
44. “1964 Report,” YTA, group 15, box 32, file 5, document 12. When the issue was partially resolved and a few categories of people received pensions, the annual report noted that “the refusal of the Polish government to pay the pensions is an important factor delaying *aliyah*” (“1965 Report,” YTA, group 15, box 32, file 5, document 14).
45. On this subject, see Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, 362.
46. EED to Dov Sattath, 2 October 1958, ISA, 130.23/3118/21. As a result, Yeshayahu Almagor, the Israeli diplomat accused of interfering in internal Polish affairs, was recalled to Israel.
47. Amir to Avigdor Dagan, 14 November 1960, ISA, 130.23/3336/33 (document 323).

48. Report by EED Director Shmuel Eliashiv on his visit to Eastern Europe, late 1949, ISA, 130.11/2514/4 (document 130).
49. See, e.g., report by Arieh Kubovi, Israeli minister in Poland, "Our Relations with Polish Jewry," 11 October 1951, ISA, 130.11/2493/10 (document 163). Cf. memo from Stefan Antosiewicz, director of Division I, and Julia Brystiger, director of Division V, in the Polish Ministry of Public Security, 31 July 1952, AIPN, BU 0192/433 t. 1 (document 180).
50. Avigdor Dagan to Moshe Avidan, 5 October 1961, ISA, 130.23/3336/40 (document 335); memo from Witold Rodziński, 12 June 1958, AMSZ z-12 w-15 t-353 (document 274).
51. Marian Stradowski to Marian Naszkowski, 26 August 1958, AMSZ, z-12 w-15 t-351 (document 283); memo, 27 August 1959, AMSZ, z-12 w-38 t. 916 (document 298); Katz, *Budapesht, Varshah, Moskvah*, 44–45, 72–73.
52. Michael Comay to Arieh Levavi and Moshe Avidan, 26 October 1961, ISA, 130.23/3336/40 (document 336).
53. Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, 307, 385–86.
54. Stenographic record of government meeting no. 34/5726, 5 May 1966, 23, 24 (document 397).
55. Moshe Avidan to Israeli Foreign Ministry, 28 June 1956, ISA, 130.11/2497/5.
56. Shlomoh Leibovich, deputy director of EED, to Katriel Katz, Israeli minister in Warsaw, 19 February 1958, ISA, 93.07/508/10 (document 269).
57. Shlomo Shamgar [?] "1964 Report," YTA, group 15, box 32, file 5, document 12.
58. *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel*, vol. 8, documents 183 (p. 314) and 216 (p. 394). On later mediation, see, e.g., Eliezer Doron to Dov Sattath, 20 April 1965, ISA, 130.23/3580/8 (document 379). See also Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem*, 72; Govrin, *Yahasei Yisrael Brit ha-Mo'atzot*, 57.
59. Eliezer Doron to Dov Sattath, 28 April 1965, ISA, 130.23/3580/12.
60. *Ibid.*; stenographic record of government meeting no. 34/5726, 5 May 1966, 23, 24 (document 397).
61. Memo from Jacek Sosnowski, 18 July 1965, AIPN, 00231/229 t. 30; Sfarid, *Mit zikh un mit andere*, 250–54; Smoliar, *Oyf der letster pozitsye*, 263–69.
62. For instance, Shaul Shany in 1954, Ya'akov Bermore in 1958, and Israel Zohar in 1960; see Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, 269–70, 304, 310. In 1958 Shmuel Almagor left Poland because he was about to be declared *persona non grata*. Nativ, also known as the Liaison Bureau, was a semi-secret Israeli service established in 1952 by Shaul Avigur to maintain ties with East European and Soviet Jews and to encourage them to deepen their relationship with Judaism, Zionism, and Israel.
63. See, e.g., Shimoni to Katriel Katz, 15 October 1959, ISA, 130.09/2307/2 (document 304).
64. Avigdor Dagan to Moshe Avidan, 5 October 1961, ISA, 130.23/3336/40 (document 335).
65. Memo from Jacek Sosnowski, 18 July 1965, AIPN, 00231/229 t. 30 (document 384).
66. See Smoliar, *Oyf der letster pozitsye*, 290–98.
67. Amir to Avigdor Dagan, 14 November 1960, ISA, 130.23/3336/33 (document 323).
68. Israel Shaham to Tzvi Netzer, [?] February 1964, YTA, group 15, box 53, file 1, document 3.
69. Oren, "Tzirut Yisrael be-Varshah," 94–95 (Hebrew pagination); Kobylarz, *Walka o pamięć*, 98–100, 146–49; for Polish state manipulation of the memory of the Holocaust during the two decades covered here, see *ibid.*, 66–163.
70. On the committee and its initiatives, see Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland*, 145–61. See also Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, 363–66.
71. According to Michael Steinlauf, whose estimate is based on a study carried out in Poland, 960,000 Jews perished in Auschwitz, along with 73,000 Poles, 21,000 Gypsies, 15,000 Soviet POWs and 10,000–15,000 citizens of other nations (*Bondage to the Dead*, 69, 159 n. 15).
72. Anshel Reiss and Y. Sheinboym to Rehavam Amir, 6 June 1960, ISA, 130.23/3336/4; Anshel Reiss and Y. Sheinboym to Avigdor Dagan, 9 October 1961, ISA, 130.23/3336/24. When Rehavam Amir, the Israeli minister in Warsaw, asked the EED if he should seek an invitation to take part in the erection of a Jewish pavilion (telegram dated 1 January 1960, ISA, 130.09/2307/8), he was told: "Our opinion is that we should not demand an invitation" (Shimoni to Warsaw, 12 January 1960, ISA, 130.09/3336/24).
73. Yablonka, *State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann*.
74. Szaynok, *Z historią i Moskwą w tle*, 315–17. Cf. Rein, *Argentina, Israel, and the Jews*, chap. 7; *Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel*, 14:801–47.

75. Memo from Deputy Foreign Minister Józef Winiewicz, 5 March 1963, AMSZ, D.V 24–71 w-1 (document 347).
76. Memo of a conversation with Adolf Berman, 10 January 1963, AMSZ, D.V 24–71 w-1 (document 346).
77. Moshe Avidan to Avigdor Dagan, 15 March 1963, ISA, 130.23/3430/41.
78. Memo of a conversation with Adolf Berman, 10 January 1963, AMSZ (n. 76 above); Dagan to director of EED, 21 January 1962, ISA, 130.23/3430/39.
79. Memo of a conversation with Adolf Berman, 10 January 1963 (n. 76 above).
80. Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwę w tle*, 363–65.
81. Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland*, 178; Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwę w tle*, 365.
82. Memo from Deputy Foreign Minister Józef Winiewicz, 5 March 1963, AMSZ, D.V 24–71 w-1 (document 347). See also Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland*, 178. On the Polish regime's manipulative use of the statistics, see Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead*, 69–70.
83. Avidan to Avigdor Dagan, 26 April 1963, ISA, 130.23/3430/1; Sattath to EED, 5 April 1964, ISA, 130.23/3580/16 (document 364); "1962 Report," YTA, group 15, box 32, file 5, document 10. On the impact of the factional struggle within the party on the Polish-Jewish leadership, see Schatz, *The Generation*, 308–49. For the anti-Zionist agitation, see Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland*, 149–50, 177, 178.
84. See Smoliar, *Oyf der letster pozitsye*, 325–27, 330; "1962 Report," YTA, group 15, box 32, file 5, document 10; Sfard, *Mit zikh un mit andere*, 258–61, 267–69; and Avraham Agmon to EED, 17 March 1961, ISA, 130.23/3336/24 (document 331).
85. Avraham Agmon to EED, *ibid.* See also Katz, *Budapesht, Varshah, Moskvah*, 47–48; Sfard, *Mit zikh un mit andere*, 256–57; Shore, "Children of Revolution," 24–28.
86. The TSKŻ's budget was cut, its access to high-level party institutions was restricted, and the regime held discussions with it about its proper role. See "1962 Report," YTA, group 15, box 32, file 5, document 10; Sfard, *Mit zikh un mit andere*, 277–78; Smoliar, *Oyf der letster pozitsye*, 280.
87. Avigdor Dagan to the Israeli Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, 15 October 1962, ISA, 130.09/2307/11 (document 344); memo of a conversation with Adolf Berman, 10 January 1963, AMSZ, D.V 24–71 w-1 (document 346).
88. Avidan to Avigdor Dagan, 26 April 1963, ISA 130.23/3430/1.
89. Moshe Avidan to Avigdor Dagan, 15 March 1963, ISA, 130.23/3430/41.
90. Memo of a conversation with Adolf Berman, 10 January 1963, AMSZ, D.V 24–71 w-1 (document 346).
91. Memo of a meeting with Winiewicz, 15 May 1963, ISA, 130.23/3430/39.
92. A.L. Easterman to Golda Meir, 15 May 1963, ISA, 130.23/3430/39; and memo of a meeting with Winiewicz, 15 May 1963, *ibid.* On the Jewish pavilion, which was opened paradoxically at the height of the anti-Jewish campaign in 1968, see Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland*, 176–84.
93. According to Grajek, Polish Culture Minister Lucjan Motyka promised to cooperate with an Israeli representative. Grajek to Eliezer Doron, 14 April 1965, ISA, 130.23/3580/12. Grajek's publication of the conversation, presenting it as a Polish "capitulation," led to a serious diplomatic incident. See Szaynok, *Z historii i Moskwę w tle*, 364.
94. Simcha Dinitz, director of the Foreign Minister's Office, to A.L. Easterman, 1 August 1963, ISA, 130.23/3430/39; Dov Sattath to EED, 4 December 1966, ISA, 130.23/4054/33. For a similar remark, see Sattath to director of EED, 7 July 1966, ISA, 130.23/4054/31.
95. "Monument and Pavilion in the Auschwitz Extermination Camp," 3 March 1967, ISA, 130.23/4054/33.
96. Sattath to Walter Eytan, 24 February 1967, ISA, 130.23/4054/33 (document 406).
97. A. Kaplan, "Note sur ma récente tournée en Tchécoslovaquie, Pologne et Roumanie," 14 November 1965, CZA, Z6/1242.
98. See, e.g., director of EED to Sattath, 4 August 1966, ISA, 130.23/4054/33 (document 400); Sattath to Walter Eytan, 24 February 1967, ISA, 130.23/4054/33 (document 406).
99. Sattath to EED, 4 December 1966, ISA, 130.23/4054/33; Sattath to Moshe Karmil, 13 January 1967, ISA, 130.23/4054.33.
100. Sattath to Walter Eytan, 24 February 1967, ISA, 130.23/4054/33 (document 406). Rusinek explained that only in the third stage would a representative of Yad Vashem be part of a small committee of experts (in the first stage a group of historians from Jagiellonian University

- would scrutinize the material and in the second stage a summary of the historians' work would be presented to the International Auschwitz Committee).
101. Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland*, 178–79, 282 nn. 106–11.
 102. Yablonka, *State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann*, 165, 252.
 103. *Ibid.*, 165–66, 252, 214–17; Sattath to Shlomo Levav, 1 January 1965, ISA, 130.23/3580/16.
 104. Yitzhak Friedman, deputy director general of the Israel Ministry of Education, to Dov Sattath, Israeli ambassador to Poland, 11 May 1966, ISA, 130.23/4054/21. The TSKŻ made it difficult to arrange meetings between young Israelis and Polish Jews (Sattath to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, 29 August 1966, ISA, 130.23/4054/21).
 105. Sattath to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, 29 August 1966, *ibid.*; Yablonka, *State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann*, 216–17.
 106. Sattath to Shlomo Levav, 1 January 1965, ISA, 130.23/3580/16.
 107. Yitzhak Friedman to Sattath, 11 May 1966, ISA, 130.23/4054/21.
 108. Sattath to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, 29 August 1966, ISA, 130.23/4054/21.

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