

## **The development of a joint political program for the Jews of Poland during World War I – success and failure**

MARCOS SILBER

*Department of Jewish History, University of Haifa, Israel*

*E-mail: msilber@univ.haifa.ac.il*

What more can be said about the extreme political factionalism of Polish Jewry? The countless failures to constitute a joint political program securing Polish Jewish interests, as well as the failure to craft a policy acceptable to most Jews in Poland, attest well to this factionalism's existence.<sup>1</sup> In his recent essay on the topic, David Engel quotes Nahum Sokolov's well-known discussion of this "traditional pestilence" that "infested" and fragmented the organizations of Polish Jewry. Engel counters that the malaise was a modern one, for traditional Jewish society, in his opinion, was dominated by monolithic institutions.<sup>2</sup> He points to the growing importance of the various political parties and their ideological differences as factors precluding joint programs and demands. He also underscores the divisive role of the Polish authorities.

I cannot pretend to solve the riddle of Polish Jewish factionalism, but I would like to challenge Engel's explanation for it by presenting a case study of an incident during the First World War, in which representatives of the different political bodies of Polish Jewry – each one with its special outlook and platform – succeeded in formulating a common political program. They did so thanks to favorable circumstances, which suggests that when genuine opportunities for joint activity arose, advantage was taken of them, hence, suggesting, in turn, that the various Jewish political camps had more in common than first meets the eye. What stymied the realization of the possibilities such opportunities presented – beside a political need for ideological differentiation, which certainly helped give birth to vociferous, aggressive, and uncompromising intramural struggles – was the intrusion of external political forces, both German, Austrian, Polish – and Jewish. To highlight the factor that either encouraged – or discouraged – cooperation, I shall examine first the internal Jewish dynamic that led to the formulation of a joint program but, then, too, how Austrian, German, and Polish politics affected intramural Polish Jewish cooperation during the First World War.

### **The Supreme National Council and the Komitee für den Osten – An instrumental alliance**

February 1916, the height of the First World War, was a turning point for four political players (each with its own goals): the German Empire, the Austrian Empire, the Polish national movement (for our purposes, its conservative Galician wing), and the various factions comprising Poland's Jewish political leadership. By this time, the German and Austrian empires had conquered Congress Poland (the section of Poland given to Russia after the Congress of Vienna in 1815), but they disagreed on Poland's future. The German goal, formulated at the beginning of the war, was to maximize control in eastern-central Europe, while weakening Russia and suppressing irredentism among the Polish residents of Prussia, whose loyalty to the German Reich was suspect.<sup>3</sup> Many options were considered: annexing Poland or parts thereof to Austria, Austrian-German administration of Poland, or even a quasi-independent Polish entity linked to Germany. This indecision allowed various ethnic and political groups to develop their own plans, which they then presented to the authorities.<sup>4</sup>

The Austrians had a clearer policy. They wanted to annex Congress Poland to Galicia (the land seized by Austria during the partitions of Poland, where the Poles enjoyed regional rule) and create a Polish "crown territory" within the empire of Franz Josef. This scenario came to be known as the Austro-Polish plan, or the Austro-Polish solution. In Vienna it was assumed – with some justification – that the establishment of a Polish entity not directly linked to Austria would draw Galicia (or at least its western, ethnically Polish regions) away from Austria and toward Polish dominion. The resulting domino effect could destroy the Habsburg Empire.<sup>5</sup> Within the Polish national movement in Austria, this plan enjoyed the support of the Galician conservatives, who favored Austrian rule in the Polish lands. Together with the Austro-Polish political coalition, they formed the Supreme National Council (Naczelny Komitet Narodowy, or NKN), which aimed to annex Congress Poland to Austrian Galicia in order to form a complete Polish entity within the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>6</sup> The advocates of this Austro-Polish solution sought allies to advance it within the German administration.<sup>7</sup>

As for the Jewish leadership, their main advocate came from German Jewish Komitee für den Osten (Committee for the East). This committee was constituted of German Zionist leaders, alongside other German Jewish figures, who preferred the autonomist option for the Polish Jewry, namely, the recognition of the Jews as a national minority deserving national rights.<sup>8</sup> The Komitee had been approached by members of the Polish Supreme National Council (among them Ignaz Rosner)<sup>9</sup> in the hopes of assistance in gaining access to the Reich Chancellor in Berlin, where the Poles felt the future

of Poland would be determined. In the spring of 1915, the Polish Council agreed to the Komitee's demand for national rights for the Jews, including educational and lingual autonomy as well as a curial electoral structure based on a national cadastre. This structure entailed both population and voter registration by nationality (e.g., Jewish), ensuring proportional representation of national minorities in the parliament. In return, the Jews were to lobby German policy makers regarding the Austro-Polish solution.<sup>10</sup>

The Komitee indeed did promote the Austro-Polish plan among high German officials. One aspect of their argument was that recognition of the Jews as a national minority in the Polish political entity to be established by the Austrian emperor would help Germany indirectly control Poland and Galicia. The Komitee also pointed out that German-Austrian-Jewish agreement on this issue would weaken Slavic influence within the Austrian empire, a matter of real concern for high-ranking officials in the German Foreign Ministry and the Premier Ministry. Furthermore, limiting the power of the Poles in the nascent entity by awarding national rights to its minorities would prevent exclusive Polish control and likely discourage Polish irredentism in Prussia. The Komitee operated with the knowledge of both the Office of the Reich Chancellor and the German Foreign Ministry,<sup>11</sup> which endorsed the understandings reached by the Komitee and the council.<sup>12</sup> Berlin's backing of these agreements in the frame of the Austro-Polish solution was then at its peak, as were German efforts to protect Jews from "Polonization." At that moment, therefore, the Komitee's efforts accorded with mainstream German policy. In mid-August 1915, Austro-Hungarian foreign minister Stephen von Burian entered into negotiations with German chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg, who inclined toward the Austrian request to annex Congress Poland to Austria-Hungary (following some border adjustments). His proposal would have granted the "Polish Kingdom of Austria" broad autonomy and a *landtag* (provincial parliament) of its own.<sup>13</sup>

### **A political program for Polish Jewry**

Pursuant to all this, in February 1916, with the active assistance of the moderate assimilationist Samuel Goldflam, the Komitee für den Osten convened the senior leadership of the various Jewish ideological camps in Warsaw. The aim was to unite the Polish Jewish leadership behind a common program. The meeting which took place in Warsaw attracted representatives of all four political camps: the integrationists (often called assimilationists), the nationalists, the socialist workers, and the Orthodox.<sup>14</sup> The integrationists, the smallest of the four, conceded that Jewish cohesion stemmed from adherence to Judaism. As part of the Polish nation, however, they insisted that

Polish Jews should be fully integrated, both socially and linguistically, into Polish life and also committed to the freedom and independence of Poland. Though well organized before 1914, this camp had declined during the course of the war, until finally it split into two factions: the assimilationists, who envisioned the Jews' complete integration into the Polish nation, language, and culture, and the neo-assimilationists, or moderate assimilationists, who foresaw a lengthy, non linear process of integration of the Polish Jews into Polish Society and advocated Polish Jewry's common struggle for equality.<sup>15</sup> Important representatives of both factions attended the meeting.

The thriving nationalist camp had also splintered into two main factions, but both participated. One was the Zionist Organization, whose highly organized, but weak leadership failed to earn its constituents' respect. The other saw the Jews as a diaspora nation and developed a strong ideology built on Yiddishism. Eventually coalescing into the Folkist party (Folkspartei), it later assumed great significance on the Polish "Jewish street," especially in Warsaw. For both factions, the Jews were a modern nation, which deserved national rights in the lands of their dispersion.<sup>16</sup> The workers' camp, too, was comprised of two main parties, and both sent representatives to the meeting. The first was the Bund, which wished to transform Poland into a socialist society guaranteeing national cultural autonomy for its Jewish minority (based on Yiddish, the language of the Jewish masses). The Bund was the largest Jewish workers' party and had greatly increased its strength during the war.<sup>17</sup> The second, Poalei Zion, sought to create a Jewish socialist society in Palestine, but it also advocated national-minority rights for diaspora Jews.

The fourth camp, the Orthodox, saw the Jews as a religion-based people, not a modern nation. Though the largest of the four camps, the Orthodox party was politically in its infancy. Its political consolidation had occurred during the war thanks to the intervention and patronage of the German Orthodox establishment (the Freie Vereinigung), which inspired the organization of a full-fledged political party that later became Agudas Isroel.<sup>18</sup> Together with Rabbi Pinhas Cohen of Ansbach, the highest-ranking member of the Freie Vereinigung in Warsaw, the city's Orthodox political leaders joined the representatives of all the other factions at the meeting. Members of the different camps (particularly progressive leader Stanisław Kempner, a very active political figure, an influential integrationist and editor of the *Nowa Gazeta*; and the Zionist Heshl Farbstein) recommended discretion about the gathering. This recommendation, as we shall see below, had a crucial outside origin.

Two main topics were discussed: the establishment of a body to represent the Jewish public before the authorities and the Polish political establishment, and the formulation of minimal political demands on which all Polish Jews could agree. The speakers who dealt with representation stressed the need for

closing ranks. Ironically, the most outspoken advocate of unified leadership was the integrationist Samuel Goldflam, who, we recall, had been one of the meeting's initiators. Goldflam urged cooperation among all Jewish parties and criticized Warsaw's Jewish communal leaders for not representing their constituents before the German authorities and Polish political circles.

All the speakers realized that regardless of its desires, the Jewish communal leadership could not establish a unified body given its composition and mode of operation – although an Orthodox delegate, Joel Wegmeister, suggested that a special committee composed of representatives representing all groups undertake to confront the issue of the establishment of a unified Jewish body. According to the Bund's Eliezer Heller, a body representing the entire Jewish public was needed to defend Jewish interests in negotiations with the Poles. The integrationists expressed reservations. They doubted the wisdom of appointing a special committee on the grounds that all the political factions already worked together in philanthropic organizations.<sup>19</sup> They also argued that it was premature to constitute such a body before the Polish question was internationally resolved.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, the meeting focused on drafting a minimalist platform.

The discussion began by airing the Komitee für den Osten's understandings with the Polish Supreme National Council in Vienna in the spring of 1915. Following that, it was suggested that a break of ten minutes be declared in order to allow each group to discuss the report's implications separately, after which, the full plenum would reconvene. However, upon reconvening, the integrationist Kempner unexpectedly read a written statement supporting the demand for national cultural autonomy. Initially, he emphasized that his circle did not consider the Jews a nation, nor did it foresee the development of Yiddish. Assimilation on the basis of cultural progress was the answer to the Jewish question; this process needed no artificial outside intervention.<sup>21</sup> But then Kempner proceeded to read the integrationists' proposal for an operative program:

We disagree with any use of political pressure to force assimilation on the Jewish masses. Nonetheless, we recognize that the masses are entitled to benefit from educational methods compatible with their needs. Therefore, we agree in principle with the idea of guaranteeing in the constitution the legal status of a Supreme [Jewish] National Council [to deal with] matters of culture – in other words, a body to organize the education of Jewish youngsters and the development of Jewish culture based on the right of linguistic self-determination following the relevant statistics in the Jewish population census. This idea will be accepted only if realized within the framework of an independent constitution for Poland. Under no

circumstances should it contradict or hinder voluntary assimilation and the inculcation of civic duties toward the Polish homeland and the Polish political idea among the Jewish masses. Needless to say, the Jews of Poland, regardless of their self-definition with respect to language, will enjoy unexceptionally full and constitutionally guaranteed civil equality.<sup>22</sup>

The opposite of what might have been expected, Kempner's statement recognized the Jews as a national minority and demanded Jewish cultural autonomy, as well as it insisted on constitutional guarantees to ensure continuity. All of this naturally presupposed that the Polish question would be resolved within the framework of an autonomous Polish entity, probably envisaged as part of a multinational empire rather than the nation-state to which the bulk of the Polish national movement aspired. Though surprisingly put forward by the assimilationists, who counted among their ranks such extremists as Bolesław Eiger, Stanisław Natanson and Józef Vasercug, this proposal was one that all present at the meeting could accept. It is my contention that the sacrifice of assimilationist principles this proposal entailed, which would pave the way for formulating common demands, was decided upon well beforehand, not during the brief ten-minute break that preceded its reading.

The first to endorse the proposal were the representatives of the workers' parties. Eliezer Heller<sup>23</sup> even added that his party, the Bund had long advocated such a proposal, influenced by "the writings of Renner."<sup>24</sup> He was also confident that Polish social-democratic circles would back "cultural autonomy for the two segments of the Polish populace."<sup>25</sup> (Heller may have been referring to the PPS-Lewica's, the Polish Socialist Party-left, which gathered Socialists of a more radical line), support for Yiddish schools and some form of cultural autonomy in its contacts with the Bund.<sup>26</sup> Alternatively, he may have known that in a recent meeting with Kempner and the German Komitee, Jodko-Narkiewicz, an associate of Josef Piłsudski, who was then promoting the Austro-Polish solution in socialist circles, had stated that the Polish Social Democrats favored cultural autonomy for the Jews.<sup>27</sup> Heller thus accepted the assimilationists' wording, although it failed to champion Yiddish, a bone of contention between the camps.

Both the Zionists and the nationalists (the proto-Folkists) had already sought cultural autonomy for Polish Jewry and had proposed a curial arrangement on the national, as well as the local, level.<sup>28</sup> During the meeting, however, they neither supported nor opposed the assimilationists' program, but one report says they did pronounce it acceptable, albeit insufficient in their sights.<sup>29</sup> The Orthodox representatives also voiced no opinion. Their silence presumably signified assent, since the assimilationists' phraseology would have allowed the Orthodox to preserve their prized educational system. Rabbi

Pinhas Cohen of Ansbach declared the statement satisfactory. In addition, Komitee members had met with Cohen and Rabbi Emanuel Carlebach of Köln, another German Orthodox leader in Warsaw (ostensibly prior to the Warsaw conference) and agreed on issues concerning Jewish autonomy in education.<sup>30</sup>

Hence, while leaving much to desire for each of the factions, the four together were able to support its operative principles. Even the arch-integrationist Eiger eventually expressed his satisfaction that a minimal program had informally been endorsed.<sup>31</sup> The forum thus accepted Kempner's proposal to convene a gathering that would use the assimilationist's document to help formulate a Polish Jewish platform,<sup>32</sup> which means that for the first time since the German occupation, representatives of Warsaw's major Jewish groups had concurred on a set of minimal political demands. Jewish leaders may have maintained their bitter competitiveness in the press, but privately – behind closed doors – they endorsed cooperation.

Certainly, the atmosphere and events dictated unity. First, enmity between Poles and Jews had reached frightening proportions, and the needs of the hour were pressing.<sup>33</sup> Second, the activities of the American Jewish Congress, well known to Polish Jews, were having their influence, especially with regard to the organization's efforts to unify American Jewry; this was an example to emulate.<sup>34</sup> Third, the war had separated the Polish Jewish community from its sister communities and minimized the exchange of ideas across the borders of Eastern Europe, which included limiting the centrifugally divisive pressures exerted, however directly, by such powerful Jewish political movements as the Bund and the World Zionist Organization. Fourth – and more positively – developments within Polish Jewry itself facilitated structuring a joint platform: The Orthodox camp was not yet completely organized, the integrationist vision had failed, and the nationalist split between the proto-Folkists and the Zionists had yet to reach the proportions of a full blown schism.<sup>35</sup> The Bund cooperated without reservation, despite its aversion to bourgeois parties. For, after all, the proposal – whose nationalism echoed that of the Bund itself – enable the Bund to become a partner in the political arena and carry on the class struggle through parliamentary means. Besides, though smaller than the other camps, the Bundists knew how to weather a difficult political moment in pursuit of their overall goal, not to mention that the Austro-Polish solution jibed with the Bund's own concept of autonomy for national minorities in a multinational state. Fifth, the war, somewhat ironically, with its decrease in outside ideological infiltration, enabled the political parties to put aside their differences concerning collective Jewish rights to Eretz Israel. Nonetheless, these internal developments did not alone account for the timing of the joint effort. That was a result of the conflict between

Germany, Austria, and the Polish national movement over the control of Poland.

### **A joint political program as a means of saving the Austro-Polish solution**

Not everyone in the German administration had accepted the political elite's August 1915 endorsement of the Austro-Polish solution.<sup>36</sup> Most high-ranking German occupation officials in Warsaw fought any measure that might advance the plan, including recognition of the Jews as a national minority. Moreover, February 1916 saw a new proposal for Poland: A Polish entity with truncated borders and sovereignty, functioning as a German satellite. As reports of this policy change at the Office of the Reich Chancellor and at the Foreign Ministry trickled into Vienna, the Polish Supreme National Council responded by playing the Jewish.<sup>37</sup>

The Polish leader and member of the Supreme Council Ignaz Rosner, who was also a major promoter of the Austro-Polish solution and was then enjoying diplomatic protection at the Austro-Hungarian embassy in Warsaw, organized a propaganda campaign there at the beginning of 1916, promoting a program to divide the population by national curiae. It was this program that the Polish Supreme National Council and the German Jewish Komitee für den Osten had agreed upon.<sup>38</sup> Austro-Polish interests, too, favored forging a comprehensive Jewish agreement predicated on the Council's understandings in its discussions with the Komitee (discussed above). Indeed, the Polish Council had used these understandings to secure the assimilationists' approval of an autonomist arrangement.<sup>39</sup> Once again, as in the spring of 1915, the Jews were to pave the way to the upper echelons in Berlin and turn back the clock on its decision to modify, or even abandon the Austro-Polish solution. The unification of all Jewish camps around national political demands would then facilitate a partnership with Austro-Polish nationalist demands, legitimizing the Austro-Polish solution in the eyes of the Jews, as well as many of the Poles.

Equally important for the political development of the Jews was the CKN (Centralny Komitet Narodowy), an organization based on the progressive parties in Congress Poland (one of its leaders was Stanisław Kempner himself). In early 1916, the CKN urged the Austrophiles, Germanophiles, and former Russophile Polish movements to present the occupation authorities with a single political program, leaving the Central Powers no longer able to ignore Polish political demands.<sup>40</sup> Kempner and other integrationists spearheaded this initiative, believing that a joint Jewish political program compatible with Polish demands would only reinforce the Polish platform as representing all those living in the Vistula lands and legitimate the Polish political program.

It is against this backdrop that the common political program drafted by the Jews must be understood. Promoting this achievement were not only internal Jewish developments but, primarily, the policies of the Polish national movement and the Austrian authorities.

### **The failure of the joint program: Causes and circumstances**

Paradoxically, these policies were also the project's undoing. The assimilationists' declaration appeared in the *Nowa Gazeta* – often their mouthpiece – along with brief statements that a free and democratic Poland would not impose any particular language in compulsory education and that Jews recorded in the census as Yiddish speakers could attend Yiddish schools. The paper added that “representatives of the Polish club in Vienna, representatives of the CKN, and other democratic groups” agreed with the principles of the accord.<sup>41</sup>

Both the Jewish and Polish press published the declaration with negative comments. The Yiddish papers expressed derision and malice, often in an “I told you so” tone.<sup>42</sup> Even when hinting that the document had emerged from a meeting between the assimilationists and leaders of the other camps, articles refrained from mentioning the intent to forge a joint political program. They even overlooked participation by the leaders of the journalist's own political camp!<sup>43</sup> The Polish-conservative *Czas* emphasized the split between participants and noted the proposal's acceptance by the integrationists, the Orthodox, and the Jewish labor movements, but not by the “nationalist representatives.”<sup>44</sup> The joint demands appeared in the *Nowa Gazeta* in the name of the integrationist camp alone. Their collective nature and the meeting that had spawned them remained secret. In practice, this undermined the whole initiative.

This reversal stemmed from the German policies taking root in both Warsaw and Berlin, with the latter prejudiced against the Austro-Polish solution.<sup>45</sup> Jewish unification served Austro-Polish interests but not those of the Germans. Joint demands by all four Jewish political camps on the basis of the Austro-Polish plan delegitimated the Germans' new answer to the Polish question. Though Jewish leaders had urged discretion regarding the gathering, German officials learned of the Komitee für den Osten's political activities and prohibited more talks. Komitee members did meet with high-level Polish politicians, but only after German officials were allowed to attend.<sup>46</sup> Komitee leaders also met Gerhard von Mutius of the German Foreign Office, who diplomatically expressed his “fear” of Komitee involvement in the “Polish negotiations.”<sup>47</sup> The Komitee officials countered that they would not interfere with high-level political issues and that nothing had been signed.

Furthermore, Von Mutius challenged the Komitee's right to political action because it "isn't an official commission" and "doesn't represent the whole of Jewry."<sup>48</sup> Ludwig Haas, in charge of Jewish issues in the German administration in Poland, was chosen to mediate future contacts between the Komitee and Jewish-Polish political camps.<sup>49</sup>

Back in Berlin, the Komitee leaders met Baron Diego von Bergen, responsible for Polish issues in the German Foreign Office. Von Bergen underscored the private nature of the Komitee's mission and announced the failure of the Austro-Polish solution.<sup>50</sup> In the meantime, Warsaw integrationists expressed reservations about the Jewish political program, again in the *Nowa Gazeta*.<sup>51</sup> This reversal may have been orchestrated by Natanson and Eiger, whom Haas considered very well connected with the German authorities in Warsaw.<sup>52</sup> Behind closed doors, Natanson, Eiger, and Kempner approved of the "minimal program," but they could not implement it, let alone tout it openly. "Nothing can be expected from [the integrationists], because they fear the Poles,"<sup>53</sup> stated the Komitee report. Under the circumstances, for neither the German occupation authorities nor the Poles who supported the new German solution to the Polish question (a national Polish entity with truncated borders and sovereignty that functioned like a German satellite), there was no room for the political program agreed-upon by the Jews.

\* \* \*

At the start of 1916, developments within Polish Jewish society favored the shaping of political demands that represented the entire Jewish minority in Poland. These demands included full civil rights, cultural autonomy, linguistic self-determination and the non-coercive Polonization of the Jews. Nevertheless, looking carefully at the 1916 summit, it becomes clear that external interests – namely, those of the German occupiers, the Polish conservatives of Galicia, and the Austrian Foreign Office – decisively influenced the Jews' capacity to reach an agreement in common. When these interests were served by a Jewish joint leadership or comprehensive demands, the powers-that-be urged Jewish consolidation; they thwarted even minimal agreement when joint Jewish action undermined their agenda. The divisiveness, or unity, among the Jews of Poland is thus insufficiently explained by looking solely at the politics, ideologies, or organization of the various Jewish camps. These factors were no doubt important, but they invariably ceded before the desires of the ruling administration, whether German, Austrian, or later Polish, to promote Jewish cohesion, or oppose it.

Arguably, in order to exploit all available resources, the rulers in power became involved in attempts to consolidate Jewish leadership during the First World War. Their efforts to encourage joint Jewish claims, or the contrary,

indicates the real or imaginary strength they attributed to Poland's Jewish population. The Polish authorities especially seem to have been deeply concerned. How, were a unified Jewish political leadership established, might the Jews influence the balance of power, in general, and various political and national visions, in particular? Joint leadership and demands would have bolstered the campaign for legal and constitutional measures to make the Jews' political status commensurate with their social standing. Those whose legitimacy was based on the Jews' status and influence worked to unify the Jewish ranks. Those who sought to advance other populations or aspirations worked to sabotage any such movement.

Of course, Polish Jewish unity and disunity did not end with the events depicted here. Jews in interwar Poland failed to organize an internal political forum. Nor were they able to formulate joint political demands on behalf of the entire Jewish population. On their part, Polish authorities regularly stifled any Jewish attempts to amalgamate. In the period between the two world wars, the specter of Jewish power clearly continued to threaten the re-born Polish Republic.

## Notes

1. On the efforts to constitute a joint political organization, see Shlomo Netzer, "The consultation between the Jewish Parties in Poland towards the end of 1918 with regard to the Establishment of a General Representative Body – Background and Purpose" [in Hebrew], *Yahadut Zemanenu*, 1 (1984), 275–298; Emanuel Meltzer, "Ha-Keshayim ba-Hitgabshut ha-Irgunit ve-ha-Politit shel ha-Mi'ut ha-Yehudi be-Folin bein Shtei Milhemot ha-Olam" in I. Gutman, ed., *Temurot Yesod ba-Am ha-Yehudi be-Ikvot ha-Shoa* (Jerusalem, 1996), 87–101.
2. David Engel, "'Masoret Negaim'? He'arot al ha-Megamot ha-Politiyot shel Yahadut Polin bein Shtei Milhemot ha-Olam" in Israel Gutman and Israel Bartal, eds., *Kiyum ve-Shever, Yehudei Polin le-Doroteihem* (Jerusalem, 2001), 2, 649–665.
3. See Werner Conze, *Polnische Nation und deutsche Politik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Köln-Graz, 1958), 76–164; Imanuel Geiss, *Der polnische Grenzstreifen 1914–1918, ein Beitrag zur deutschen Kriegspolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Lübeck-Hamburg, 1960), 23–35, 70–103; Werner Basler, *Deutschlands Annexionspolitik in Polen und im Baltikum 1914–1918* (Berlin, 1962), 51–130; Leon Grosfeld, *Polityka państw centralnych wobec sprawy polskiej w latach pierwszej wojny światowej* (Warsaw, 1962), 155–186; Leon Grosfeld, "Mitteleuropa und die polnische Frage im Jahre 1915," *La Pologne au XIIIe Congrès international des Sciences Historiques à Vienne* (Warszawa, 1965), 115–132; Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aim in the First World War* (New York, 1967), 189–198, 271–273.
4. Geiss, *Der polnische Grenzstreifen*, 41–70; Fischer, *Germany's Aims*, 189–198; Jerzy Knebel, *SPD wobec sprawy polskiej (1914–1918)* (Warsaw, 1967), 29–156; Jerzy Holzer, Jan Molenda, *Polska w pierwszej wojnie światowej* (Warsaw, 1973), 146–244; Heinz Lemke, *Allianz und Rivalität, die Mittelmächte und Polen im ersten Weltkrieg (bis zur*

- Februarrevolution*) (Wien-Köln-Graz, 1977), 24–38, 54–73, 78–83, 119–120, 141–155, 178–186.
5. Leon Grosfeld, *Polityka państw centralnych*, 51–52, 70–79; Molenda, *Polska w pierwszej wojnie światowej*, 70–72; Lemke, *Allianz*, 25, 38–53; Gary Shanafelt, *The Secret Enemy: Austria-Hungary and the German Alliance, 1914–1918* (New York, 1985), 39–42, 70–72.
  6. Stanislas Kutrzeba, “La question Polonaise pendant la Guerre Mondiale” in Marcel Handelsman, ed., *La Pologne, sa Vie Économique et Sociale pendant la Guerre* (Paris, 1933), 1, 24–25, 212–214; Lemke, *Allianz*, 25, 38–53; Holzer, Molenda, *Polska w pierwszej wojnie światowej*, 95–103; Leon Grosfeld, *Polityka państw centralnych*, 23, 47–48; Wiktor Sukiennicki, *East Central Europe during World War I, From Foreign Domination to National Independence* (New York, 1984), 1, 120–122.
  7. Lemke, 141–156; Central Zionist Archives (henceforth CZA), A15/VIII/9a, Protokoll 23.3.15.
  8. On the Komitee für den Osten, see Max I. Bodenheimer, *Prelude to Israel* (New York-London, 1963), 230–278; Max I. Bodenheimer, “The Story of the Hindenburg Declaration,” *Herzl Year Book 2* (1959), 56–77; Egmont Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik und die Juden im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen, 1969), 126–154; Zosa Szajkowski, “The Komitee für den Osten and Zionism,” *Herzl Year Book 7* (1971), 199–239; Isaiah Friedmann, *Germany, Turkey and Zionism, 1897–1918* (Oxford, 1977), 230–233; Jay Ticker, “Max I. Bodenheimer: Advocate of Pro-German Zionism at the Beginning of World War I,” *Jewish Social Studies* 43 (1981), 11–30; Jehuda Reinharz, ed., *Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Zionismus 1882–1993* (Tübingen, 1981), 148–151, 171–173, 176–179.
  9. Ignac Rosner (1865–1926) was an important member of the Stronnictwa Prawicy Narodowej, part of the Galician conservatives, and the editor of the influential Polish journal *Czas*. A close collaborator of the Austrian Foreign Ministry, he had fulfilled several official and unofficial public functions during the war. See *Wielka Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN* (Warsaw, 1962–1969), vol. 10, 83; *Pamiętnik księżnej Marii Zdzisławowej Lubomirskiej, 1914–1918*, Do druku przygotował Janusz Pajewski; *Objaśnienia Opracowała Aleksandra Kosicka-Pajewska* (Poznań, 1997), *passim*.
  10. Zechlin, *Die deutsche Politik*, 144–154.
  11. CZA, Jagow to the Komitee für den Osten, 18.4.15; CZA, A8/2/7, Adolf Friedemann’s diary, 20.4.15.
  12. Arnold von Wahnschaffe, the undersecretary of the Prime Minister’s Office and a confidant of the Reichschancellor, summarized the understandings reached by the Komitee für den Osten and the Supreme National Council thus: “The entire matter is not only interesting but also includes quite a few valuable ideas. Naturally, we do not yet know what the outcome of the war will be, but if and when such a community is established, then an arrangement according to these principles will be very desirable for both the Germans and the Jews.” CZA, Z3/205, “Empfang der Herren Dr. Friedemann und Dr. Oppenheimer beim Unterstaatssekretär Wahnschaffe am 9. April 1915, 1/2 12 Uhr, im Reichskanzler – Palais.”
  13. Lemke, *Allianz*, 180–183; André Scherer et Jacques Grunewald, ed., *L’Allemagne et les Problèmes de la Paix pendant la première guerre Mondiale, documents extraits de l’Office allemand des Affaires étrangères* (Paris, 1962), 1, 173–179; Titus Komarnicki, *Rebirth of the Polish Republic: A Study in the Diplomatic History of Europe, 1914–1920* (Melbourne-London-Toronto, 1957), 84–85; Conze, *Polnische Nation*, 80–83.
  14. For a comparative study of the camps see E. Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (New York, 1993), 4–35; A. Haftka, “żydowskie Stronnictwa Polityczne w Polsce

- Odrodzonej,” in J. Schipper, A. Tartakower, A. Haftka, eds., *żydzi w Polsce Odrodzonej. Działalność społeczna, gospodarcza oświatowa i kulturalna*, 2 (Warsaw, 1937), 249–285; Aleksander Guterman, *Kehilat Varsha bein Shtei Milhemot ha-Olam, Otonomiya Leumit b-kvaley ha-Hok ve-ha-Metziut, 1917–1939* (Tel Aviv, 1997), 98–132.
15. On the integrationist camp, see Haftka, “żydowskie Stronnictwa Polityczne,” 253–255, 285; Joseph Lichten, “O asymilacji żydów w Polsce od wybuchu pierwszej wojny światowej do końca drugiej wojny (1914–1945),” *Zeszyty Historyczne* (1977), 96–134; A. Cała, *Asymilacja żydów w Królestwie Polskim (1864–1897)* (Warsaw, 1989).
  16. Ezra Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland: The Formative Years, 1916–1926* (New Haven, 1981), 24–36, 43–45, 50–54, and 73.
  17. Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale: The Formative Years of the Jewish Workers’ Movement in Tsarist Russia* (Cambridge, 1970); John Bunzl, *Klassenkampf in der Diaspora, zur Geschichte der Jüdischen Arbeiterbewegung* (Wien, 1975), 48–118; Bina Garncarska-Kadary, *In Search of their Way, Poalei Zion: The Left in Poland up to World War II*, [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, 1995), 21–44; Yoav Peled, *Class and Ethnicity in the Pale: The Political Economy of Jewish Workers’ Nationalism in Late Imperial Russia* (New York, 1989); Gertrud Pickhan, *Gegen den Strom, der allgemeine jüdische Arbeiterbund ‘bund’ in Polen 1918–1939* (Stuttgart-München, 2001), 13–69.
  18. Mordechai Breuer, “Rabanim Doktorim be-Folin bi-Zeman ha-Kibush ha-Germani (1914–1918),” *Bar-Ilan* 24–25 (1989), 117–153; Gershon C. Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition: Agudat Yisrael in Poland, 1916–1939*, Jerusalem, 1996, 34–46.
  19. CZA, A15/VIII/9c, “Sitzung im Hause des Dr. Goldflam [!] am 3. Februar 16 um 8 1/2 Uhr.” Samuel Goldflam used to write his family name according to the Polish spelling (Goldflam). In the German documentation his name was spelled according to the German spelling (Goldflamm).
  20. Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie (Kraków) (henceforth APwK), NKN 147, “Narady w sprawie żydowskiej w Polsce,” 5 lutego 1916.
  21. “*Indem wir das Judentum als ein nationalbildendes Element nicht anerkennen, indem wir, weiter, in die Möglichkeit der kulturellen Entwicklung des jüdischen Jargons kein Glauben besitzen und endlich die Assimilation als einzig wirksames Mittel der Regelung der jüdischen Frage auf der Grundlage des kulturellen Fortschrittes anerkennen (obwohl wir einsehen, dass diese Entwicklung nur stufenweise vor sich gehen muss).*” “Sitzung im Hause des Dr. Goldflam am 3. Februar 16 um 8 1/2 Uhr.”
  22. This translation reflects the official German and Polish texts below:  
*Sind wir jedoch von der zwangsmässigen politischen Assimilation der jüdischen Massen weit entfernt. Ebenso erkennen wir an, dass die Massen Erziehungsmethoden, die ihrem inneren Wesen angepasst sind, geniessen müssen. Wir sind deswegen der Meinung, dass der Gedanke eines verfassungsmässigen und gesetzlich garantierten obersten nationalen Kulturrates grundsätzlich annehmbar ist, also eines organes, welches die Erziehung und kulturelle Entwicklung der jüdischen Jugend auf der sprachlichen Selbstbestimmung und auf diesbezüglicher Matrikulierung der jüdischen Bevölkerung gründen wird. Dieser Gedanke ist jedoch nur unter der Bedingung annehmbar, dass dies erst im Rahmen der freien polnischen verfassung durchgeführt wird und dass es keinesfalls weder der Entwicklung der freiwilligen Assimilation, noch der Einimpfung der jüdischen Massen der bürgerlichen pflichten dem polnischen Vaterlande gegenüber und der polnische politischen idee stören wird. Es versteht sich von selbst, dass Juden in Polen ohne Unterschied von sprachlicher Selbstbestimmung volle bürgerliche Gleichberechtigung geniessen werden die in den sätzen der Verfassung eine absolute Garantie findet.*

“Sitzung im Hause des Dr. Goldflamm am 3. Februar 16 um 81/2 Uhr.”

*Jesteśmy jednak dalecy od zalecania przymusowej asymilacji politycznej względem mas żydowskich. Uznajemy przytem, że masy korzystać muszą z metod wychowawczych, zastosowanych do ich wewnętrznej potrzeby.*

*Z tych względów jesteśmy zdania, że w zasadzie przyjąć można pomysły konstytucyjne i prawie zawarowanej zwierzchniczej rady narodowo-kulturalnej, jako organu, który oprze nauczanie i wychowanie kulturalne młodzieży żydowskiej na podstawach językowego samookreślenia i na stosownej rejestracji ludności żydowskiej.*

*Przyjęcie tego projektu zależy jest jednak od warunku, że koncepcja taka może zostać urzeczywistniona dopiero w ramach samodzielnej konstytucji polskiej i że nie będzie ona hamowała ani rozwoju dobrowolnej asymilacji, ani zaszczerpienia masom żydowskim zarówno obowiązków obywatelskich wobec ojczyzny polskiej jakoteż politycznej idei polskiej.*

*Samo się przez się rozumie, że Żydzi w Polsce bez względu na ich językowe samookreślenie, korzystać będą z zupełnego równouprawnienia obywatelskiego, które znajdzie bezwzględnie gwarancję w przepisach konstytucyjnych.*

APwK, NKN 147, “Narady w sprawie żydowskiej w Polsce,” 5 lutego 1916.

23. “Sitzung im Hause des Dr. Goldflamm am 3. Februar 16 um 81/2 Uhr.”
24. “Sitzung im Hause des Dr. Goldflamm am 3. Februar 16 um 81/2 Uhr.”
25. “Sitzung im Hause des Dr. Goldflamm am 3. Februar 16 um 81/2 Uhr.”
26. Feliks Tych, *PPS-Lewica w latach Wojny, 1914–1918* (Warsaw, 1960), 32–33, 39, 45, 49–50, 106. See also “Dos vahl-plataform fun sotzialistishn vahl-blok,” *Lebensfragen*, 16.VI.16. Joshua D. Zimmerman deals extensively with the PPS position toward the Bund demands in the prewar years in his forthcoming book, *Poles, Jews and the Politics of Nationality: The Jewish Labor Bund and the Polish Socialist Party in Late Czarist Russia, 1892–1914*, ch. 8. Zimmerman describes how the PPS-Lewica formulated its programmatic response to the Jewish question and endorsed Jewish national autonomy. I thank Prof. Zimmerman for kindly allowing me to see the manuscript of his book.
27. CZA, A15/VIII/9c, “Unterredung mit Dr. Kempner und die sozialdemokratischen Abgeordneten, Dr. Jodko,” o.d. [February 1916].
28. CZA, A15/VIII/9c, “Unterredung der Herren Dr. Friedemann und Professor Sobernheim mit Baron von Bergen im AA am Sonnabend den 4,” Merz 1916.
29. CZA, A8/37/3, “Bericht über die Reise der Herren Justizrat Bodenheimer, Dr. Adolf Friedemann und Prof. Sobernheim in das Deutsche Okkupationsgebiet im Osten in der Zeit vom 14. Januar 1916 bis zum 16. Februar 1916.” An anonymous report to the NKN in Cracow suggested that they opposed the assimilationists’ program, but that seems unlikely. APwK, NKN 147, “Narady w sprawie żydowskiej w Polsce,” 5 lutego 1916.
30. Ibidem. See the remarks in CZA, A15/VIII/9c, “Unterredung mit Dr. Kempner und die sozialdemokratischen Abgeordneten, Dr. Jodko,” o.d. [February 1916]. The brief report on the meeting with Cohn and Carlebach is undated. Carlebach’s February 3 letter to his wife implies that this talk took place either shortly before the general meeting or moments afterward. Alexander Carlebach, “A German Rabbi Goes East,” *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. VI (1961), 76.
31. “Sitzung im Hause des Dr. Goldflamm am 3. Februar 16 um 81/2 Uhr.”
32. CZA, A15/VIII/2a, Bodenheimer to Oppenheimer, 21.2.16.
33. Frank Golczewski, *Polnisch-Jüdische Beziehungen, 1881–1922, eine Studie zur Geschichte des Antisemitismus in Osteuropa* (Wiesbaden, 1981), 131–148.

34. On the American Jewish Congress, see Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862–1917* (New York, 1981), 548–551; Jonathan Frankel, “The Jewish Socialists and the American Jewish Congress,” *yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science*, XVI (1976), 202–341; Matityahu Mintz, *Zemanim Hadashim Zemirot Hadashot: Ber Borocho 1914–1917* (Tel Aviv, 1978), 145–158, 186–198, 253–268; “Rezolutzies vegn der yiuden frage in der yiddisher kongres in Amerika,” *Moment*, 29.2.16. See also Oscar Janowsky, *The Jews and Minority Rights (1898–1919)* (New York, 1966), which is the major treatment of efforts to achieve national rights for east European Jewry during the war. Russian Jewry drafted a common program about a year and a half later. See Mordechai Altschuler, “Ha-Nisayon Le’ argen Kinus Klal Yehudi be-Rusia Ahar ha-Mahapecha,” *He-Avar* 12 (1968), 75–89.
35. There has been no comprehensive study of the Folkist party’s development in Poland in general or of the Folkists’ “prehistory” in particular. Nevertheless, see Ezra Mendelsohn, *Zionism in Poland*, 24–25, 50–54, 60–61, 64, 92–93, 131, 203–204, 215, 218; on its prehistory, see also “Bericht über die Reise;” CZA, Z3/472, Bodenheimer to A.C., 17.4.16; CZA, L6/102, J. Berger to the Zionist Central Office in Berlin, 3.2.16; CZA, A15/VIII/2e, Nomborg to Bodenheimer, 30.3.16; CZA, A15/VIII/2e, Max Bodenheimer, “Die zionistische Resolution in der Schulfrage;” CZA, L6/104, Herrmann to Berger, 14.8.16; Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem, P3/1114, notes from August 28, 1916.
36. Lemke, *Allianz*, 189–199.
37. Conze, *Polnische Nation*, 144–147.
38. AA, WK, No 20c, Bd. 5, “Vorschläge zur Regelung der Stellung der Minderheiten im Zukunfftigen polnischen Gemeinwesen” (August 1916); CZA, A15/VIII/9c, Diskret (February 1916); Friedemann’s diary, 20.2. 16.
39. CZA, Z3/161, Berger to Lichtheim, 4.5.16.
40. Sukiennicki, *East Central Europe during World War I*, 126; Jerzy Holzer, Jan Molenda, *Polska w pierwszej wojnie światowej*, Warszawa, 1973, 182–183, 347–348.
41. “Vorschläge zur Regelung.”
42. “Asimilatzia medaberet,” *Hatzfire*, 14.2.16; “Yidishe Presse,” *Letzte Naies*, 28. 2.16; “Asimilatoren far Yiddish,” *Letzte Naies*, 29. 2.16. See also AA, Wk14a, Bd. 10, kk. 203535–203540. After remarking that all the camps had accepted the principles of national cultural autonomy cited by the Bund, the Bundist weekly underlined the differences in this ideology in the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. “Natzional-kulturele Oitonomie,” *Lebensfragen*, 18.2.16.
43. See N. Prilutski, “A vorenish,” *Moment*, 22.2.16, 2.
44. *Czas*, no. 106, 28. 2.16. The reference to the “Jewish nationalist representatives” was based on a misinterpretation of the information received from Warsaw by the NKN. “Narady w sprawie żydowskiej w Polsce.”
45. Conze, *Polnische Nation*, 146–147; Lemke, *Allianz*, 209–212; Shanafelt, *The Secret Enemy*, 72–80; see also Friedrich Loebell’s statements in his letter to Bethmann about the future of Russian Poland in Geiss, *Der polnische Grenzstreifen*, 162.
46. CZA, A15/VIII/9c, Sitzung mit den christlichen Polen.
47. CZA, A15/VIII/9c, Diskret.
48. *Ibid.*
49. “Bericht über die Reise.”

50. CZA, A15/VIII/9c, Unterredung der Herren Dr. Friedemann und Professor Sobernheim mit Baron von Bergen im Auswärtigen Amt am Sonnabend den 4. März 1916 um 11 Uhr.
51. According to: AA, WK, No 14a, Bd. 10, "Warschauer Tageblatt, Nr. 44, Warschau. Die Assimilation und die jüdische Schulen."
52. CZA, A15/VIII/9c, Reise nachh Warschau.
53. CZA, A8/37/3, "Bericht über die Reise der Herren Dr. Adolf Friedemann und Prof. Sobernheim nach Polen und Oberost in der Zeit vom 18. November bis 28. November 1916."