

Institute of National Remembrance

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Communiqué: Investigation regarding communist state officers who publicly incited hatred towards people of different nationality.

The Prosecutor of the Branch Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation of Institute of National Remembrance launched investigation regarding communist state officers who publicly incited hatred towards people of different nationality, in 1968-1969 in Łódź, with the aim to direct repressions to the Polish citizens of Jewish nationality, what constitutes communist crime as of Art. 2 § 1 of the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance - Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation of December 18th, 1998.

Notification by Jarosław Nowak, adviser on the contacts with Jewish Community to President of Łódź, was the reason to start the verifying activity in the case. Broad search query in archival resources was carried out. The anti-Jewish actions were initiated by speech delivered by Władysław Gomułka, First Secretary of Central Committee of PZPR party (Polish United Workers' Party) on June 19th 1967. In his speech Gomułka declared existence of "Imperialist and Zionist fifth column" in Poland. Those theses were repeated and developed in successive speeches, also on March 19th 1968.

Furthermore, the Łódź Centre for Party's Propaganda issued two "anti-Zionist" leaflets: "The Zionism, its origin, political character and anti-Polish character" and "Party, government policy and its opponents". The leaders of Voievodship Committee of PZPR stirred the anti-Jewish actions in Łódź, e.g: the Secretary of Town Committee (responsible for propaganda and agitation) decided to distribute confidential leaflets at universities, among military units and party organizations of main institutions and companies. Also the two main Łódź dailies "Głos Robotniczy" and "Dziennik Łódzki" were publishing explicitly anti-Jewish articles. According to the statistical data of Passports and IDs Office (operating within Ministry of Interior Affairs) the emigration of Polish citizens of Jewish nationality was frequent in 1956-1960 when the annual number amounted to 3 - 6 thousands persons. The emigration reached its peak in 1957 when 30 331 Jews left Poland. In 1961-1967 the average number was 500-900 persons per year, in 1968 - 3 900 Jews applied for documents, and in the period

between January and August 1969 the number was almost 7300.

The results of analyses of archival resources show that in 1968 in Łódź many people were dismissed from their positions or simply fired: these were high positioned university employees, managers of industrial companies and local newspapers journalists who supposedly were of Jewish origin and subscribed to Zionist beliefs. In each case the decision of dismissal was proceeded by party's resolution about expelling from the party. The managers' dismissals were justified by incompetence and misuse of funds, the scholars' were blamed for supporting or tolerating students' movements, incorrect opinions or even "Zionist" beliefs. The journalists were fired because of incorrect political opinions - especially the views on Arab-Israel conflict in 1967.

The archival records show also that the security organs prepared personal data forms of persons with "family background in Israel" as well as comprehensive data on persons of Jewish origin, including those dismissed from their positions. Among archival records there are also information about persons who did not hold any positions in the party, public administration or a company but applied for permission to emigrate to Israel, for undetermined reasons.

As it results from the analysis of the archival records the party central authorities were undoubtedly calling for hatred towards representatives of Jewish nationality. This action echoed at the local levels in the whole country. For the purposes of the investigation it is necessary to determine the identity of people who were responsible for inciting and leading the actions in Łódź voievodship as well as finding out separately in each individual case the actual reasons, legal grounds and the mode of dismissal from work, reasons for emigration from Poland. It should be checked also if the state services obeyed the procedures in those cases in order to find out if, apart from calling for hatred against people of different nationalities, the officers of communist state committed crimes against individual citizens.

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