

## Review of *Generation*,

By: **Jaff Schatz** (1991).

University of California Press, Berkeley.

Reviewer: **Mr. Jan Peczkis**

### Zydokumuna, Polish-Jewish Property Disputes, and Much More

Jewish author Schatz provides a great deal of information about the Zydokumuna (Jewish Communism in Poland), tracing this phenomenon from before WWI through the 1970's.

In common with many others, he suggests that the desire for a better world and the elimination of anti-Semitism were major causes of the Zydokumuna. However, there are problems with this thesis. Anyone who became a Communist willfully overlooked the fact that Communism was from the beginning, to anyone who looked objectively at it, a movement based on lies, violence, and totalitarianism. Instead, throughout the 1920's, Polish Jews chose to look at the Soviet Union through rose-colored glasses. The eventual appearance and growth of anti-Semitism among Communists (p. 354), the arrests and executions of many Jewish Communists by Stalin (p. 102), the WWII deportations of Polish Jews to Siberia (p. 161), the obvious rottenness of Soviet society (p. 155), etc., all failed to permanently turn devotees away from Communism. An obvious double standard emerged: The real or imagined injustices of Polish society were cited as a ground for turning to Communism, but the much greater injustices under Communism were willfully overlooked. Perhaps becoming (and remaining) a Polish Communist had less to do with fighting injustice and more with exercising a visceral and entrenched hatred of Poland, of religion, and of free enterprise.

Schatz estimates that Jews comprised as much as 70% of high and medium level functionaries in the Communist party (pp. 360-361), with overall membership commonly reaching 50-60% (p. 96), sometimes more. In fact, Schatz (p. 96) remarks: "Given this background, a respondent's statement that 'in small cities like ours, almost all Communists were Jews' does not appear to be a gross exaggeration". Note that a 50-70% level corresponds to Jews being five to seven times more common in the Communist Party than in the general Polish population.

However, Schatz attempts to minimize the overall scale of the Zydokumuna by alleging that, while a lot of Polish Communists were Jews, comparatively few Polish Jews ever became Communists. This is disingenuous. To begin with, only a small percentage of the population of ANY nationality ever becomes formally active in politics. Second, for every CP member, there are many fellow travelers. In fact, Schatz later inadvertently demolishes his own argument when he writes (p. 82): "Western analysts who deem the membership of the Polish Communist party as insignificantly small often commit the mistake of forgetting that the movement acted underground, that membership was punishable by a severe prison sentence, that the devotion of the movement's cadres made up for much of its quantitative weakness, and, finally, that the movement had significant influence on a relatively large group of sympathizers and supporters."

Schatz (p. 98) allows for Polish Jews accounting for 2/5ths of the Communist vote (meaning that the Jewish popular vote for Communism was fourfold that of the Jewish share of Poland's prewar population). He then again tries to downplay the scale of the Zydokumuna by alleging that only 5% of Polish Jews voted for the Communists. However, this ignores at least two facts. First of all, voters usually prefer to vote for parties that have a chance of winning an election. Second, most Communist sympathy was covert in nature, only becoming manifest when Polish rule weakened. Apropos to this, Schatz neglects the large number of Jews who seemingly came out of the woodwork to attack Poles during the 1920 Polish-Bolshevik War and only superficially (and euphemistically) discusses the repeat of the same (p. 153) during the Soviet conquest of eastern Poland in 1939. Schatz argues that the degree of postwar Jewish involvement in the UB

(Bezpieka: Communist security forces) cannot be accurately known. In doing so, he does not mention numerous reports of Polish political prisoners who identified their torturers as Jews. Second, the determination of the true scale of Zydokumuna is hindered by the fact that Polish Communist Jews were strongly encouraged, on numerous and successive occasions (pp. 184-185, pp. 213-214, and p. 365) to hide their Jewishness by changing their names and otherwise pretending to be ethnic Poles. Note also that this disguise began long before the Red Army had entered Poland and set up the UB terror apparatus, which eventually cost the lives of perhaps 300,000 Poles.

The killing of a few hundred Jews by Poles, partly the result of postwar property disputes, has recently gotten a great deal of one-sided media attention as a result of the publication of *Fear*, by Jan Thomas Gross. Writing 15 years earlier, Schatz had the following take on this subject (p. 206): "Thus, the stone throwing and grudging surprise that 'so many Jews are still alive' that met many returnees on crossing the border were not accidental. The wartime German occupation resulted in a barbarization of social life, and Nazi propaganda contributed to the dehumanization of the Jew in the public mind. Against this background, the fact that Jewish Communists were conspicuous in the regime's side of the power struggle reinforced one of the traditional elements in image of the Jew, namely, that of a servant of anti-Polish interests (to such a degree that anyone who served the new regime was liable to be suspected of being a Jew). It was not the actual number of Jews on the regime's side but their visibility that reinforced this Jewish stereotype."

Again, bearing in mind the gentile disguise of most Polish Communist Jews, the true scale of Zydokumuna can only be given a minimal estimate. However, note that, unlike the fantastic anti-Polish thesis advanced by Jan Thomas Gross, Schatz is, to his credit, at least willing to recognize the brutalization of the war-ravaged Polish people, and the very real Zydokumuna, as factors in these killings. In conclusion the Zydokumuna was no boogeyman. It was detrimental to the Polish nation and contributed to the sufferings of Poles and Jews alike. □

## Hans Frank's Diary

By: **Stanislaw Piotrowski**

Reviewed by: **Jan Peczkis**

Stanislaw Piotrowski, the only Polish delegate at the Nuremberg Trials (p. 6), gives the reader an introduction to Hans Frank. This Butcher rationalized the killings of Jews and Poles by comparing their deaths with those of Germans on the battlefield (p. 56, 249, 277). This book, prominently featuring the destruction of the Jews, is yet another refutation of the silly contention that postwar Polish authors didn't differentiate between the martyrdoms of Polish Jews and Polish gentiles.

The Nazis practiced extensive cultural genocide against the Poles, and eventually murdered 2-3 million Polish gentiles, including much of the intelligentsia. Yet German officials admitted that Polish resistance was not limited to any identifiable subgroup (p. 59, 142), and that the "intelligentsia" was broadly defined (p. 299).

In addition to the foregoing, the Germans employed various "passive"-genocidal techniques against the Polish population as a whole, as also elaborated by Lemkin. Frank described German-ruled Poland as a concentration camp (p. 95). Well put! The millions of Poles sent to the Reich were not there solely for labor, but also for the purpose of reducing the Poles' overall fertility (p. 68, 154). The confiscation of Polish feedstuffs in the General Government was extreme (p. 272), so much so that the Polish population faced near-famine conditions (p. 93, 97-100, 109), leading to epidemics (p. 100, 252). This German policy, reminiscent of the initial "passive" destruction of Jews through enforced starvation and disease in the ghet-

tos, was ameliorated only in the face of declining Polish productivity (p. 280), and the danger of massive unrest (pp. 106-107, 281).

Many Holocaust materials create the impression that Poles lived quasi-normal lives. Instead, the severe privations faced by Poles help the reader understand why Poles didn't always aid Jews, and why Poles sometimes betrayed or killed fugitive Jews who were suspected of, or known to be, stealing from Poles.

SS Oberfuhrer Dr. Schongarth concluded: "No people has ever before had to suffer such oppression as that being suffered by the Polish people..." (p. 283).

According to Frank, the complete extermination of Poles was stayed by the Reich's need for workers (p. 115), yet this could change: "Once we have won the war, then, for all I care, mincemeat can be made of the Poles and Ukrainians and all the others who run around-come what may..." (p. 297).

Accusations are often leveled nowadays against the Catholic Church for being complicit with, or at least indifferent to, the Nazis' extermination of the Jews. Ironic to this, both Hitler and Frank believed that the Church and the Jews were in cahoots with each other against Germany-and had been so for decades! (p. 140, 330). Frank repeatedly accused the Polish Church of fostering anti-German sentiment (p. 137-140), for which he threatened dire consequences (p. 216, 223). This refutes the ludicrous contention that the Polish Church should've condemned the slaughter of Jews, or at least the alleged Polish complicity in it!

Some recent authors (e. g., Jan Tomasz Gross) insinuate that there was no Polish Quisling because the Germans never wanted one. This egregious falsehood is exploded by none other than SS Oberfuhrer Dr. Schongarth: "There is not a single Pole who would now come forward and really work for the Government." (p. 142). Moreover, the Germans failed to secure Polish collaboration in even lesser matters. Piotrowski comments: "The attitude of broad sections of Polish society was so hostile to the Nazi invaders, that they also failed in their attempt in 1944 to form an 'Antibolshevik League'. Nor were Frank and his subordinates successful in their attempt to persuade the members of the Main Welfare Council, called in German the 'Main Polish Board' (Polnischer Hauptausschuss) publicly and openly to adopt a pro-Nazi position in their charitable work." (p. 143) □

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## Orthodox Jews break into Nazi death camp

ABC NEWS STORY website dated August 1, 2007 reports ... A group of Orthodox Jews from Israel have broken in to the former Nazi extermination camp of Majdanek in eastern Poland, police say.

Security guards at the camp, now a museum, called the management and the police when the 33 Orthodox Jews penetrated the camp after the end of visiting hours.

"They forced open two gates that lead to the army barracks of the former Nazi camp," Lublin police spokeswoman Anna Smazak said.

She says that the matter had been sorted out amicably after contact was established with the Israeli embassy in Warsaw.

"The head of the group, a man of 28, said that all the damage would be reimbursed," the police spokeswoman said.

The group's motive for trying to gain access to Majdanek was not immediately clear.

At the Majdanek death camp, set up by the Nazis near the eastern Polish city of Lublin, 360,000 people died between 1941 and 1944, either in the gas chamber or at the hands of firing squads.

Among the camp's victims were 200,000 Jews, 120,000 non-Jewish Poles and Soviet prisoners of war. □