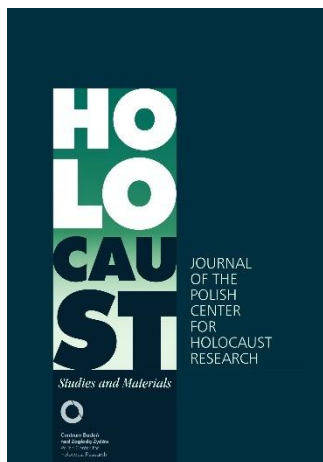




Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały

Holocaust Studies and Materials

VOL. 14 (2018)

ISSN: 1895-247X

eISSN: 2657-3571

DOI: 10.32927

WWW: www.zagladazydow.pl

Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów IFiS PAN
Polish Center for Holocaust Research

Logic of Evasion. On the Protocol of Joseph Tenenbaum's Audience with Primate August Hlond on 3 June 1946

Logika uniku. O protokole audiencji Josepha Tenenbauma u prymasa Augusta Hlonda 3 czerwca 1946

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32927/zsim.94>



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The Logic of Evasion. On the Report on Joseph Tenenbaum's Audience with Cardinal August Hlond, Primate of Poland, on June 3, 1946

Abstract

The document discussed in this article was discovered by Alina Skibińska in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is a memo penned by Professor Olgierd Górka (1887–1955), a historian and the director of the Bureau for Jewish Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, concerning an audience the chairman of the World Association of Polish Jews, Joseph Tenenbaum (1887–1961), received with Cardinal August Hlond (1881–1948) on June 3, 1946 in Warsaw.

Key words

The Church's attitude to Jews, postwar pogroms of Jews in Poland, Cardinal August Hlond, Joseph Tenenbaum (1887–1961)

The June 1946 audience, reported on in the document discovered in the Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹ by Alina Skibińska, fits in with the long tradition of meetings organized on the initiative of Jews concerned about the safety of their community with the Polish Church hierarchs. From 1934 to 1946 the scenario of those meetings followed this pattern: Jews would bring up a problem resulting from the Catholics' actions and request that those actions be influenced by means of, for instance, a pastoral letter. The hierarch would say that the Church always condemned violence – both Christian and Jewish – but was unable to do anything as it did not deal with politics. And then he would give his own views on the cause for that violence.

This was precisely the course of the 1934 audience with Cardinal Aleksander Kakowski (1862–1938), which had been requested by a delegation of the

¹ Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych [Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] (hereafter: AMSZ), Political Department, Section for Jewish Affairs, 105/1685.

Orthodox Union of Polish Rabbis (Kanal, Perelman, Langleben, and Fajner).² And was held on June 7th. The rabbis, faced with the proliferating attacks on Jews by right-wing paramilitary groups under the guise of patriotism, called for a publication of a pastoral letter.³ The Cardinal refused to take that topic up. In response to their petition,⁴ the rabbis heard the Church formula about condemnation of any aggression “either on the part of Catholics or Jews,” followed by accusations that Jews at large “did not respect faith and tradition,” lacked morals, promoted pornography, and financed communism. While the Cardinal stated that he did not hold the rabbis personally accountable for those generalization, he obliged them as representatives of “the Jewish society acting with such solidarity in defense of its interests” to influence their fellow believers in abandoning the sinful path. When one of the rabbis remarked that the “godless Jews” criticized by Cardinal Kakowski were not Jews but communists, he heard that those were young Jews financed by their elders from Poland and abroad.⁵

The document discovered in the MSZ Archive concerns a meeting held 12 years later which took an almost identical course. The meeting took place on June 3, 1946 in Warsaw between Cardinal August Hlond (1881–1948), chairman of the World Federation of Polish Jews Joseph Tenenbaum (1887–1961), and the author of the report, Professor Olgierd Górka (1887–1955), who was a historian and director of the Bureau for Jewish Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

When Tenenbaum turned to Hlond with a request that the latter make an appeal to society “condemning the recent murders of Jews in Poland,” the Cardinal did not respond and went on to deplore all political crimes, only “a small percentage of which was made up of murders of Jews.”⁶ The topic of the

² Hebrew: *Agudat Ha-Rabanim Be-Polin* – established in 1921, organization which had the objective of unifying Orthodox rabbis who had successfully completed an examination in Polish, as mandated by the prevailing government directives.

³ See Ronald Modras, *The Catholic Church and Antisemitism: Poland, 1933–1939* (Routledge, 2000), p. 341.

⁴ In *Wiadomości Archidiecezjalne Warszawskie* of 1934 (pp. 248–249) the Cardinal published also a separate response to that petition, later reprinted in the form of the brochure entitled *Odpowiedź J. E. Ks. kardynała Kakowskiego rabinom warszawskim w sprawie żydowskiej w Polsce* [The response by His Eminence Cardinal Kakowski to the rabbis of Warsaw regarding the Jewish question in Poland]. (Białystok: Wydawnictwo L.M., 1934).

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ Hlond repeated this opinion almost word for word a month later in his statement following the Kielce pogrom. “Sadly some Jews have died in the fatal armed clashes on the militant political front, but the number of dead Poles is incomparably larger” (Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej [Archive of the Institute of National Remembrance; hereafter: AIPN], 944/548, p. 21, typewritten, quoted in Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą. Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego* (Warsaw: Czarna Owca, 2018), vol. 2, p. 661. As early as November 1945, August Hlond expressed a similar opinion at his meeting with Rabbi Professor Michał Żylberberg. When asked about the “attacks on Jews,” he said they “filled him with sadness” (the word “real” was crossed out in the authorized version) and then added, “But I don’t

conversation then switched from anti-Jewish violence to Jews' collective guilt towards Poles. The Cardinal expressed a view that the antisemitic sentiments in Poland were caused by the "high representation of Jews in the executive, the Security Office, and the censorship." When Doctor Tenenbaum tried to return to a possible intervention by Church authorities what could put an end to the murders, the Cardinal made it clear that he had no influence over the "forest people," that is, the anti-communist underground. After all, he was no politician. That was when Professor Górka, the author of the report, spoke up, emphasizing that it was not about politics, but "murders on the poorest of the Jewish poor," "completely apolitical," and to make matters even worse, they were "conducted following the worst Nazi models."⁷ The Cardinal showed interest in lists of the murdered his visitors had brought, and interlaced his comment by presenting his own contributions in providing help to Jews in France (a thread that recurred in his statement prepared for US journalists after the Kielce pogrom).⁸

Joseph Tenenbaum also left a testimony about that meeting. In his book *In Search of a Lost People: The Old and New Poland* Tenenbaum discussed his expectations concerning that conversation: "I sought the key to the heart and mind of this exceptional hierarch, Cardinal Hlond. I knew that he was the only one who could stop the murder of the remaining Polish Jews, and I hoped that his years in France and his arrest by the Nazis had softened his heart toward this unfortunate nation. I had also heard that he used his influence to help Jews escape the Nazis while in France. I prayed to find a different Hlond than the one I knew from his 1936 pastoral letter."⁹

While the 1936 letter Tenenbaum mentions, *O katolickie zasady moralne* [On Catholic moral principles],¹⁰ basically repeated the accusations against Jews from Cardinal Kakowski's 1934 statement quoted in the beginning of the present article, it is remembered as one of the most harmful statements made by the prewar Church.¹¹ There are at least three reasons for this. First, as Ronald

regard this so much as a manifestation of antisemitism as I do a fierce political game, the victims of which are a much larger number of Poles" (quoted in Bożena Szaynok, "Prymas Hlond wobec Żydów [Primate Hlond toward the Jews]," *Więź* 3 [2018]).

⁷For example, see the description of Jews being dragged out of a train amid cries of "Heraus, aussteigen" on October 3, 1946, near Kamińsk. This was probably part of the anti-communist underground's "train campaign". See Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego [Archive of the Jewish Historical Institute (hereafter: AŻIH), CKŻP [The Central Committee of Polish Jews], CKS [Central Special Commission], boxes 1–2, pp. 156–158; see also Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą...*, vol. 1, e.g. p. 207 and footnote 1190 [see also eadem, *Cursed: A Social Portrait of the Kielce Pogrom* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2023)],

⁸See Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą...*, vol. 2, pp. 660–661.

⁹Joseph Tenenbaum, *In Search of a Lost People: The Old and New Poland*, New York: Beechhurst Press, 1948, pp. 234–235.

¹⁰The letter was reprinted in full by Modras (*The Catholic Church...*, pp. 346–347).

¹¹Recently, Hlond's letter was used as an argument against the hierarch's canonization process, which is being prepared by the Vatican. See Rabbi David Rosen's letter to Cardinal

Modras writes, Hlond, supreme among Polish clergy, morally endorsed the idea of an economic boycott of Jews, thus legitimizing it. Second, the letter postulated complete segregation of the society; in conjunction with statements made by other Church hierarchs, who warned against perilous influence even of Jewish children (see Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek's 1941 pastoral letter), this played an important role in the alienating Jewish Poles in the eyes of society, which would later accept the fate to which Jews were doomed by the Nazis without objection. Third, Hlond's letter, which enumerated Jewish vices on the one hand while prohibiting violence against Jews on the other, is a testament to an inculcation based on mechanisms that block moral reflection.¹² "One must not hate anyone. Not even Jews," wrote the Cardinal, juxtaposing extraordinary Jewish perfidy with heroism among those with the strength to resist the temptation of violence. As the Jewish daily *Haynt* stated after Hlond's letter was published, any efficacy in distinguishing between antisemitism that was "delicate, stately, cultural" and "anti-Jewish excesses" was highly unlikely in practice.¹³

As soon as Chairman Joseph Tenenbaum arrived in Poland, he had immediately begun setting up the audience with Cardinal Hlond. Although he was advised to first visit Cardinal Adam Sapieha (1867–1951), Tenenbaum stuck to his original plan. The meeting took place a month before the Kielce pogrom, on June 3, 1946. Tenenbaum's testimony about his conversation with Hlond is much less diplomatic than the balanced report by Olgierd Górka. According to Tenenbaum, the hierarch, during their conversation, consistently denied the occurrence of any antisemitic violence in Poland: "They are not murdering them as Jews. Instead, they are avenging the murders on the Polish population committed by the Polish Jewish-communist government."¹⁴ The newly elected Primate¹⁵

Kurt Koch, chairman of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with Jews, <https://www.ajc.org/news/ajc-questions-papal-decree-to-canonize-polish-cardinal-hlond> (accessed: September 30, 2018).

¹² British anthropologist and psychologist Gregory Bateson identified the double bind, a formative mechanism rooted in education, as a cause of schizophrenia. See also Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 1977), pp. 362–383 [English edition: *Male Fantasies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987)]. A double bind is defined as a situation in which one faces two absolute commands or requirements that are mutually contradictory or exclusive, yet one is unable to see the contradiction between them.

¹³ *Gazeta Kościelna* 170 (1936), quoted in Modras, *The Catholic Church...*, p. 347.

¹⁴ Tenenbaum, *In Search of the Lost People...*, pp. 236–238. He was not alone in that conviction, as evidenced by the titles of articles in the Catholic weekly *Niedziela*, for instance, "There is no antisemitism in Poland," quoted in Natalia Aleksy, "The Polish Catholic Church and 'the Jewish question' in Poland, 1944–1948," *Yad Vashem Studies* 33 (2005): 151. A similar view recorded by Rev. Józef Kruszyński in his diary was discussed by Dariusz Libionka in "Księdza Józefa Kruszyńskiego spojrzenie na Zagładę" [Rev. Józef Kruszyński's look at the Holocaust], *Gazeta Wyborcza* [Lublin], January 26, 2008.

¹⁵ The ingress of Cardinal August Hlond to the rank of the bishop came a week earlier, on May 30, 1946.

pinned the blame on Jewish communists running the country.¹⁶ And he echoed Cardinal Kakowski's earlier view that a Jewish conspiracy existed or at least an agreement across divides: "Why does world Jewry allow them take over the government and oppress the Christian people?"¹⁷ The following sentence captures Tenenbaum's mood after that conversation: "The longer I stayed in Poland, the less hope I had that Hlond's position [on issues concerning the Jews – J.T.B.] would change for the better."¹⁸

Tenenbaum was not the only one to hold such an opinion about representatives of the Polish episcopate. Around that time, Cardinal Sapieha met with a group of French Jews, with Catholic thinker Emmanuel Mounier among them. We can learn details of that audience through Zofia Nałkowska, who learned those details from Tadeusz Bereza: "The Cardinal appeared [to his guests] as an evil, merciless man (Rev. Glasberg to Sapieha: 'There are 60,000 Jews left in Poland.' Sapieha: 'Well, you should add one more zero, Father.'). And an anti-Semite. He was ill-disposed and grumpy."¹⁹ Mounier, after his return to France wrote in *L'Esprit* about the "stark antisemitism evident also among top hierarchs of the Catholic Church, " who behaved "as if the extermination of the Jews had never taken place."²⁰

The British ambassador to Poland Victor Cavendish-Bentinck, who after the Kielce pogrom was trying unsuccessfully to set up an audience with Cardinal Sapieha and calling for a pastoral letter to be published in defence of the Jews, had a similar impression. "I was told that due to the strong antisemitic sentiments in Poland the bishops, fearing the weakening of the Church's influence, did not want to openly condemn antisemitism, he wrote. "I, however, doubt this explanation and I treat it as a mere pretext for avoiding an unambiguous condemnation of antisemitism. I fear that the Polish clergy is deeply antisemitic."²¹

Cavendish-Bentinck was particularly shocked by a view expressed by one bishop: "Bishop Bieniek, an auxiliary bishop from Upper Silesia, surprised me yesterday by remarking that there was evidence that the child whose purported torture had caused the Kielce pogrom, had indeed been tortured by the Jews,

¹⁶ Bishop Stefan Wyszyński shared a similar opinion about the Kielce pogrom with a Jewish delegation. During the meeting, as they were discussing the source of the pogrom, Wyszyński stated the following: "The causes of that incident run much deeper and are rooted in the general aversion to Jews taking an active part in today's political life" (Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą...*, vol. 2, pp. 664–665).

¹⁷ Tenenbaum, *In Search of the Lost People...*, p. 237.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 235.

¹⁹ Zofia Nałkowska, *Dzienniki* [Diaries], vol. 6, part 1: 1945–1948 (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 2000), p. 257.

²⁰ Emmanuel Mounier, "L'ordre règne à Varsovie?," *L'Esprit*, June 1946, p. 999.

²¹ Quoted in Aryeh Kochavi, "The Catholic Church and Anti-Semitism in Poland Following World War II as Reflected in British Diplomatic Documents," *Gal-Ed on the History of the Jews in Poland* 1 (1989): 124.

who purportedly really did take the child's blood from his forearm. If a bishop is able to believe that, then there is no wonder that ignorant Poles believe this too."²²

This seems the right context in which to bring up the widely discussed remark made by Lublin Bishop Stefan Wyszyński about the "old and new Jewish books," which were collected during the Beilis trial, and in which "the issue of the [legend of] blood had not been ultimately settled."²³ That statement was made during a conversation with the Jewish delegation (M. Szykkrout, St. Słuszny) about the possibility of issuing a pastoral letter after the Kielce pogrom.

No such letter was ever published. In the episcopate's statement issued after its autumn conference in Częstochowa the only reference to the Kielce pogrom was a condemnation of Bishop Teodor Kubina, the only one to have addressed his congregation and negate the purported occurrence of Jewish ritual murders. According to Zenon Wrona, Bishop Kubina was the reason for the bishops, to pass an ordinance during the Plenary Conference of the Episcopate of Poland, obliging themselves

to refrain from taking a personal stance on all events in the country without exception, so as to avoid causing situations such as the one after the Kielce events [...], when an ordinary from one of the dioceses started making proclamations the content and intentions of which were deemed unacceptable by his fellow ordinaries in view of the fundamental intellectual and canonical principles of the Catholic church.²⁴

Reinforced by similar statements, this ideological unanimity of bishops concerning Jews is also found in later testimonies about audiences, such as rabbi Michał Żylberberg's meeting with Cardinal Hlond or Feliks Sommerstein's conversation with Rev. Józef Kruszyński.²⁵ These all echo elements of an antisemitic worldview, from assuming of Jews' collective responsibility for purportedly acting in unison despite their political differences to a conviction about their omnipotence and the 'Judeo-communists' stereotype to the at Jews' social visibility due to equality of rights then being introduced by the communists authorities.

This last element recurs in the memoir of Jechiel Alpert, chairman of the Kielce Ihud, who in the spring of 1946 asked Bishop Kaczmarek for help. Alpert's

²² Ibidem, p. 123.

²³ Quoted in *Antyżydowskie wydarzenia kieleckie 4 lipca 1946 roku. Dokumenty i materiały* [The anti-Jewish events in Kielce on July 4, 1946. Documents and materials], vol. 2, ed. Stanisław Meducki (Kielce: Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1994), pp. 116–117.

²⁴ See, for instance, Zenon Wrona, "Kościół wobec Żydów w Kielcach 1946 roku [The Church towards Jews in Kielce 1946]," in *Pamiętnik Świętokrzyski. Studia z dziejów kultury chrześcijańskiej* [Świętokrzyski diary. Studies in the history of Christian culture], ed. Longin Kaczanowski et al. (Kielce: Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1991), p. 299.

²⁵ See Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą...*, vol. 1, p. 120.

reason was the increasing number of attacks on Jews in the Kielce region, including a grenade thrown into the Jewish Committee's cafeteria in Kielce on October 18, 1945. Their meeting was also attended by the chairman of the Kielce congregation, Pinkus Ajzenberg.

We spent an hour with him [Bishop Kaczmarek]. I told him that I came to ask him to influence his clergymen so that they could influence the Polish society to make it realize that the small handful of Jews who survived should not continue to be oppressed. He smiles and says: "It's odd that you've approached me about that. Why, you certainly read the press and know that we have no influence whatsoever. How can I influence my souls when I have no say...?" He said that with such irony. And then went on: "You know what? Jews are skilled merchants, skilled physicians, skilled attorneys – Poland is ruined and needs energy. Why aren't the Jews doing what they are good at? Why are they meddling in politics? Can you imagine what it looks like when a priest comes to a ministry and there's a Jewish woman sitting there, who isn't even Polish and God only knows where she's from, and she addresses our clergy from a position of superiority and with insolence? Do you know what impression this makes?"²⁶

Documents

Warsaw, June 4, 1946

Bureau for Jewish Affairs

top secret

*Min. Rzymowski*²⁷ with a request for [the document's] return²⁸

To the Political Department

in

Before I start my report on the conversation between Cardinal August Hlond,²⁹ the Chairman of the Federation of Polish Jews Doctor Joseph Tenenbaum,³⁰ and myself, the undersigned,³¹ which was held on the 3rd of this month, I must

²⁶ See Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod kłótnią...*, vol. 2, p. 561; the testimony was recorded by Ida Fink.

²⁷ Wincenty Rzymowski (1883–1950), a Democratic Party activist and minister of foreign affairs from 1945 to 1947.

²⁸ Handwritten annotation.

²⁹ August Hlond (1881–1948), Roman Catholic clergyman, Salesian, from 1926 to 1948 Archbishop, then Cardinal (1946) and Primate of Poland.

³⁰ Joseph Tenenbaum (1887–1961), chairman of the American and World Federation of Polish Jews.

³¹ The report was written by Olgierd Górka (1887–1955), a historian and a graduate of the University of Lvov. He lectured at the universities of Lvov, Jagiellonian, and Warsaw. He was a Legionist and, during 1919–1920, a military attaché in Bern and in 1921 – in Bucharest. Journalist and activist of the Democratic Party. He lived as an émigré in France and Great

remind that before the convention of the Polish Episcopate held in Częstochowa on May 20–22 this year, the Polish Antiracist League³² submitted a letter on May 18, to Cardinal Hlond concerning recent murders of Jewish citizens in Poland.

The letter, which I edited for the League's purposes, emphasized the need for an official Polish Episcopate's statement denouncing those murders. The letter was delivered by a special delegation of the League (citizen Emilia Hiżowa,³³ Prof. Kazimierz Kumaniecki,³⁴ MP Marek Arczyński,³⁵ editor Tadeusz Rek³⁶) to Cardinal Hlond's residence in Gniezno and – in his absence – handed to Bishop Walenty Dymek, who received the delegation. Thus, Cardinal Hlond knew in advance what progressive Polish public opinion and Jewish circles expected from the Polish clergy.

When I contacted the Archiepiscopal Curia through the agency of Rev. Antoni Baraniak's³⁷ about Chairman Tenenbaum's audience with Cardinal Hlond, possi-

Britain during the war. He was a member of the Polish government in exile and director of the Department of National Affairs. He returned to Poland in 1945 and was the director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Bureau for Jewish Affairs from 1946 to 1947. In 1947, became the Consul General of Poland in Jerusalem. He belonged to the Polish Antiracist League and was the editor-in-chief of its publication, *Prawo Człowieka*. See Zbigniew Romek, *Olgierd Górka, historyk w służbie myśli propaństwowej (1908–1955)* [Olgierd Górka, historian in the service of pro-state ideas (1908–1955)] (Warsaw: Semper, 1977); AMSZ, 6, Political Department, Życiorys O. Górki [Olgierd Górka's curriculum vitae], 104/1678, pp. 8–9; Archiwum PAN [Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences], Materiały Olgierda Górki [Olgierd Górka's materials], III-63.

³² This document and other documents from 1946 have not survived in the Antiracist League (1947–1952) files stored at the Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw (Archiwum Akt Nowych). Antiracist League was a social organization established in the spring of 1946 in Warsaw, with the objective to fight racism, predominantly all manifestations of antisemitism in the Polish society. It was to be an ideological continuation of Żegota. The League's members included, for example: Juliusz Górecki (chairman), Tadeusz Rek, Adolf Berman, Marek Arczyński, Stanisław Dobrowolski, Kazimierz Kumaniecki, Władysław Bartoszewski, Jan Wesołowski, Józef Gójski, Tadeusz Manteuffel, and Władysław Bieńkowski. The League was primarily active in academic circles in Cracow and Łódź. For a time, it published the periodical *Prawo Człowieka*, as well as a few books. Following the Kielce pogrom on July 4, 1946, the League protested through posters and leaflets. In the second half of 1946, Władysław Bartoszewski was arrested, and the publication ceased. Many League members either emigrated from Poland or ceased their public activities.

³³ Emilia Hiżowa, née Elżanowska (1895–1970), a member of the Żegota Council for Aid to Jews, during 1947–1952 a member of the Legislative Sejm of the Republic of Poland.

³⁴ Kazimierz Kumaniecki (1905–1977), a classic philologist and professor at Warsaw University, member of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

³⁵ Marek Arczyński (1900–1979), a social activist, politician, and journalist. Member and treasurer of the Żegota Council for Aid to Jews. From 1945 to 1952 he was a member of the Sejm.

³⁶ Tadeusz Rek (1906–1968), a lawyer, journalist, and folk movement activist. He was a deputy chairman of the Żegota Council for Aid to Jews and a member of the Sejm. He was also a vice minister of justice and a Supreme Court justice.

³⁷ Antoni Baraniak (1904–1977), a Roman Catholic bishop, Salesian, a chaplain and a secretary to the Polish Primates August Hlond and Stefan Wyszyński.

bly with my presence if required, the matter was settled quickly and kindly, but on condition that the interview and the content of the conversation would not be published, except for mentions of the meeting itself. The Curia's secretariat substantiated this request by saying that Cardinal Hlond once met in Poznań with a Jewish representative who then misinformed the press about what Cardinal Hlond had said.³⁸

Cardinal Hlond met with us unaccompanied and tried to make our conversation, which lasted over half an hour, cordial and straightforward. But in fact, as soon as Mr. Tenenbaum first urged him about a clergy's appeal to society condemning the recent murders on Jews in Poland, Cardinal Hlond avoided a direct answer and quickly began to talk about the condemnable political murders in Poland, a small percent of which was made up of murders of Jews. When we again tried to pinpoint the essential issue of condemning ~~public murders~~³⁹ those murders in a public appeal, Cardinal Hlond emphasized, mentioning the League's letter, that the Episcopate has already begun to investigate those matters, and that the material would be collected in individual provinces and that the case had to be well prepared and investigated from all perspectives.

When Tenenbaum remarked that the murders of Jews affected the most miserable population, the handfuls of survivors and repatriates, Cardinal Hlond remarked that the Church condemned those murders but at the same time he said that the antisemitic sentiments in Poland were caused by the high representation of Jews in the executive, the Security Office, and censorship. The Cardinal emphasized that initially, the entire Catholic press had been controlled by Jewish censors but much had changed for the better since then.

When Tenenbaum argued that the Church was very influential in Poland and could do a lot, Cardinal Hlond made it clear that the Church had no influence on the 'forest people'.

Seeing that Cardinal Hlond kept veering off to rather secondary considerations and current political affairs despite his emphasis that he "was not a politician," I rejoined the discussion, stressing that it was not about moments of political struggle, but murders of the poorest of the Jewish poor, completely apolitical, and that these murders were conducted following the worst Nazi models, including ordering the men to strip naked, etc. Pressured again, Cardinal Hlond once more emphasized the need to investigate those matters and then he took from Mr. Tenenbaum the lists of Jews murdered during the last weeks which the latter had brought. He also stated that he was interested in obtaining all materials concerning that matter.

The conversation basically revolved around pressure exerted by one side and attempts to evade a straightforward statement. Cardinal Hlond substituted anecdotes about his help to Jews during his stay in France, while on our part of

³⁸ This is probably an allusion to Professor Michał Żylberberg's audience, see footnote 6.

³⁹ Crossed out.

Mr. Tenenbaum and I asserted that any manifestation of help to Jews made by the Polish clergy had always been praised by international public opinion, for instance, during the recent World Jewish Congress in Atlantic City. Our goodbye was polite but Mr. Tenenbaum – perhaps rightly so – was dissatisfied with the results, claiming that what Cardinal Hlond said was a more guarded repetition of what he had told the French priests who turned to him a few weeks earlier regarding the same matter. Those priests from the most recent French delegation of intellectuals left Poland with the impression that the Polish clergy was generally rather antisemitic.⁴⁰

A clear impression I got from the above conversation, an impression I did not share with Mr. Tenenbaum, is this: pressured by petitions such as that of the League or ours, the Polish Episcopate *does not*⁴¹ intend to make a specific appeal condemning racist murders of Jews. Instead, it is planning, if need be, for an address by the Primate or the Episcopate condemning political murders as such, without addressing anybody in particular, though of course, the address would include words condemning the murders of Jews.

This is perhaps the only concrete impression I can infer from Cardinal Hlond's vague statements.

Professor Olgierd Górka
Director of the Bureau for Jewish Affairs

Translated by Anna Brzostowska and Jerzy Giebułtowski

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944/548, Statement by Cardinal August Hlond, following the Kielce pogrom

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Central Committee of Jews in Poland, Central Special Commission

Press

L'Esprit, 1946

Gazeta Kościelna, 1936

Wiadomości Archidiecezjalne Warszawskie, 1934

⁴⁰ A reference to the delegation a member of which was Emmanuel Mounier; see footnote 20.

⁴¹ In the original the two words were underlined twice.

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