

From Anti-Semitism to Anti-Muslim Racism: The Evolving Face of the Far-Right in Poland



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Introduction

The size of the nationalist march in Warsaw on 11 November 2017¹ brought renewed interest in far-right politics in Poland and its potential repercussions for community cohesion in Poland and abroad. In the United Kingdom, Poland is the most common non-UK country of birth for people living in the UK, and therefore, the potential repercussions are of added relevance and importance.² In recent months, however, the Home Office has stopped far-right speakers from Poland from attending rallies in the UK. The fear that the far-right will seek to recruit Poles in Britain is not new³ but is perhaps reflective of a broader perception that Poland is shifting further to the right under the populist Law and Justice party (PiS).⁴ The PiS was, arguably, able to absorb support for the traditional far-right in Poland which signalled their political decline and irrelevance as the PiS dominated right-wing politics both in opposition, and when the PiS led a coalition government, which included the far-right as a junior partner in 2006.⁵ Reflective of this political change, other major far-right groups turned their attention to the independence day marches, incorporating more violent and hostile forms of political activism.

A noted figure in the Polish far-right, Marian Kowalski, was unable to speak in Ealing, west London after local police intervened to close down a restaurant for 48 hours.⁷ The danger, however, remains, that far-right speakers will seek to use traditional community spaces, be it restaurants or school buildings, to spread division and avoid media scrutiny. It took the combined efforts of local anti-racist activists within Polish communities to translate materials which we, in turn, passed to authorities to limit the reach of speakers like Kowalski. Nor should this success overshadow the deeper problem of monitoring the far-right in Polish communities given the obvious linguistic difficulties when monitoring social media accounts or their activities offline. The concern is how the mainstream continues to absorb far-right discourses into a broader populist anti-immigrant discourse. As Rafał Pankowski, a professor at Collegium Civitas in Warsaw, told the Guardian, not everyone on the Independence Day march was a member of the far-right, but they still marched under the banner of nationalism.⁸ It remains a concern that individuals from far-right groups in the UK have attempted to bring over extremists from Poland or have travelled to the country to participate in far-right rallies. Others have attempted to give far-right voices a larger audience outside of their native Poland with interviews conducted in English. A Polish supporter of Britain First drove his van at a Muslim man in north-west London on the

¹ "Nationalists March on Poland's Independence Day." BBC News. Last modified 11, 12.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-europe-41963496/nationalists-march-on-poland-s-independence-day>.

² "Poland Most Common Non-UK Birth Country." BBC News. Last modified August 25, 2016.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-37183733>.

³ "The Anti-immigration Party Trying to Recruit Immigrants." BBC News. Last modified July 11, 2017.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-40509632>.

⁴ Pankowski, Rafał, and Marcin Kormak. "Radical nationalism in Poland: From theory to practice." RIGHT-WING IN EUROPE (2013): 161.

⁵ Ibid. 161.

⁶ "CHRONOLOGY: Polish Coalition's Bumps and Bruises." U.S. Last modified July 9, 2007.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-government-factbox-idUSL0918465320070709>.

⁷ "Ealing Police Prevent 'Right Wing' Polish Speaker Addressing Audience". Accessed November 27, 2017.

<http://www.ealingtoday.co.uk/default.asp?section=info&page=eakowalski001.htm>.

⁸ Davies, Christian. "'More Girls, Fewer Skinheads': Poland's Far Right Wrestles with Changing Image." The Guardian. Last modified November 27, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/18/more-girls-fewer-skinheads-polands-far-right-wrestles-with-changing-image>.

anniversary of the EU referendum vote on June 23.⁹ Marek Zakrocki, 48, was heard to have said that he intended to 'kill a Muslim' and CCTV footage captured him shouting about 'white power' and making Nazi salutes before he attempted to ram Kamal Ahmed with his van.¹⁰ Police found Britain First newspapers and flyers in his home in Harrow, and Zakrocki later admitted to donating money to the group.¹¹

A key lesson for cohesion and mutuality moving forward is how to incorporate interfaith dialogue. As Włoch (2009) notes, the Polish church has celebrated Islamic holidays, and some church authorities even criticised the publication of a cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad.¹² Engaging with Jewish communities will further the dialogue of mutuality and help Poles confront more painful and problematic eras of their national history. Moreover, as Włoch alludes to, the discourse of 'strangeness' focuses upon cultural and national difference.¹³ It does not look at religious difference which offers scope to facilitate more faith-based dialogue in Polish communities.

Review of Existing Literature

Faith Matters is proud to launch a new community-focused project that will aim to empower Polish communities to challenge anti-Muslim narratives. This project launches with a briefing paper that will outline some of the key ideologues and political parties in Poland and how these individuals have exported such views to settled Polish communities in the UK.

This briefing paper seeks to explore why this form of Polish nationalism which so often distils into a form of ethnonationalism, where the position of ethnic origin overshadows other affiliations, differs from our traditional understanding of nationalism.¹⁴ As Pankowski (2010) argued, nationalism, in broad terms, is the understated backbone of mainstream politics in Poland, as many radical right parties will use the term to self-identify as 'nationalist' in popular political discourse, in the hope of drawing from the wellspring of this political tradition.¹⁵ A political space where historical identities and values supplant other interests.¹⁶

Contemporary analysis speaks of the phenomena of 'Islamophobia without Muslims'¹⁷ in Poland given that Muslim communities account for less than 1% of the population. The Pew Research Center puts this figure at just 0.1%.¹⁸ Others argue this is merely a phantom¹⁹ or

⁹ "Britain First Supporter Drove Van at Curry House Owner, Court Hears." The Guardian. Last modified December 4, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/dec/04/britain-first-supporter-drove-van-harrow-curry-house-owner-court-hears>.

¹⁰ "Britain First Supporter Drove Van at Curry House Boss." Mail Online. Last modified December 4, 2017. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5143793/Britain-supporter-drove-van-curry-house-boss.html>.

¹¹ "Britain First Supporter Drove Van at Curry House Owner, Court Hears." The Guardian. Last modified December 4, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/dec/04/britain-first-supporter-drove-van-harrow-curry-house-owner-court-hears>.

¹² Włoch, Renata. "Islam in Poland: Between ethnicity and universal umma." *International Journal of Sociology* 39, no. 3 (2009): 65.

¹³ *Ibid.* 65.

¹⁴ Pankowski, Rafal. *The populist radical right in Poland: The patriots*. Routledge, 2010. Pp. 8-10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 12.

¹⁷ Włoch, Renata. "Islam in Poland: Between ethnicity and universal umma." *International Journal of Sociology* 39, no. 3 (2009): 63.

¹⁸ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/19/5-facts-about-the-muslim-population-in-europe/>

¹⁹ Buchowski, Michał. "Making Anthropology Matter in the Heyday of Islamophobia and the 'Refugee Crisis': The Case of Poland." *Český lid: etnologický časopis (Český lid: Ethnological journal)* 103, no. 1 (2016): 57.

'platonic'²⁰ form of anti-Muslim racism, where hostile attitudes, fanned by negative press coverage grew among some communities who have no personal interactions with Muslims. For example, Włoch (2009) described how the Polish press 'relished' in lurid details of the building of a mosque in Italy or stories of Islamic clothing in France.²¹ Some have pointed to the role of salacious media reporting in the growth of Islamophobic attitudes in Poland following the 9/11 terror attacks in the United States.²² Some, however, point to the end of mass censorship in 1989, and the rise of for-profit and privately owned mass media in Poland in the 1990s, as a watershed moment in how representations of Islam and Muslims shifted, a reversal of the positive relationships Communist Poland fostered with many Muslim-majority states.²³ When interactions do occur, in particular with Polish converts, some report they have been accused of 'betraying' their culture or forced to defend tenets of their faith with misinformed strangers.²⁴ For female converts, there was a suspicion among some, that they were seduced or forced into converting by Arab men.²⁵

This cultural phenomenon, while not exclusive to Poland, is antithetical to the Polish tradition of coexistence with their minority Muslim communities, and has intensified in some respects in recent years. Between 2005 and 2008, negative views of Muslims in Poland jumped from 30% to 46%, according to the *Pew Research Center's Pew Global Attitudes Project*.²⁶ Such hostile attitudes, moreover, appeared in the European Values Study, which, in that year, found that Poles favoured neighbours who had far-right views rather than having to live next to Muslims in 2008.²⁷ The *Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights* in 2010 found that Arabs (grouped as one cohort) are one the most disliked minority groups among Poles.²⁸ Others highlight how Polish society views Islam through the lens of Arab identity.²⁹ Górak-Sosnowska (2007) highlighted the apparent 'Arabization of Islam', drawing on market research in 2001 which found a common association between 'Arabs' and 'Islam' shortly after the 9/11 terror attacks.³⁰ Nowaczek-Walczak (2011) expanded this area of research by interviewing multiple Arab restaurant owners in Poland's capital Warsaw, the issue of Arab stereotypes was a thread that united the diverse opinions. The most common and problematising stereotypes concerned the cruelty of Arab husbands and Muslims as

²⁰ Górak-Sosnowska, K. (2006). Platoniczna Islamofobia? ('Platonic Islamophobia?'), <http://www.arabia.pl/content/view/282077/2/>.

²¹ Włoch, Renata. "Islam in Poland: Between ethnicity and universal umma." *International Journal of Sociology* 39, no. 3 (2009): 64.

²² Allen, Christopher. "Justifying Islamophobia: a post-9/11 consideration of the European Union and British contexts." *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 21, no. 3 (2004): 1-25.

²³ Nalborczyk, A. S. "The Image of Islam and Muslims in the Polish Mass Media before and after 11 September 2001." *TRANS: Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften* 15 (2004).

²⁴ ŁojekMagdziarz, A. (2007). New Islam in Poland – Polish Converts. *ORMA. Revistă de studii etnologice și historicoreligioase*, 6, 55–62.

²⁵ Krotofil, Joanna. "'If I am to be a Muslim, I have to be a good one'. Polish migrant women embracing Islam and reconstructing identity in dialogue with self and others." *Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe* (2011): 163.

²⁶ Carriere-Kretschmer, Erin. "Unfavorable Views of Jews and Muslims on the Increase in Europe." *The Pew Global Attitudes Project. September 17* (2008).

²⁷ European Values Study. 2008. www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu

²⁸ Mikulska, Agnieszka. "Racism in Poland." Report. Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (2010).

²⁹ Włoch, Renata. "Islam in Poland: Between ethnicity and universal umma." *International Journal of Sociology* 39, no. 3 (2009): 63.

³⁰ Górak-Sosnowska, Katarzyna. "Perception and misperception of Islam in Polish textbooks." *Rocznik Orientalistyczny (Annual of Oriental Studies)* 60, no. 1 (2007): 3.

terrorists.³¹ Nowaczek-Walczak added that the Polish media often mentioned Arab countries in the context of human rights abuses, terrorism, and poverty.³² Buchowski (2016) counters that the Polish media had maintained an 'indifferent tolerance' to Muslims domestically until the refugee crisis dominated Polish politics in 2015.³³ The then Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz allowed the Estera foundation to settle 50 Christian families from Syria. In an interview with the *Financial Times* newspaper, Miriam Shaded, the head of Estera, stated that Muslims believe the 'same' as ISIS, adding that people who believe in Islam are criminals who follow a totalitarian belief structure.³⁴ Within a year, a vast majority of Syrian Christian refugees, brought over by the Estera foundation had left Poland.³⁵ Konrad Pędzwiatr (2015) argued that the populist conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party broke with tradition and politicised this so-called refugee crisis for electoral gain in the October 2015 elections. The anti-refugee rhetoric increased following the terror attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015.³⁶

A chronology of Islamophobic incidents in Poland that year demonstrates how some exploited international events to attack Islamic institutions, including an attack on a mosque in Poznań, shortly after the Charlie Hebdo terror attacks in Paris in January 2015.³⁷ Pędzwiatr and Narkowicz, writing in *OpenDemocracy*, also highlighted how sections of the Polish media grew more brazen and explicitly Islamophobic with front covers that racialised the refugee crisis.³⁸

Polling of European countries in 2016 found that negative views of minorities and refugees were commonplace. Negative views of Muslims were widespread in Italy (69%), Hungary (72%), and Poland (69%).³⁹ It is perhaps unsurprising that almost a quarter of Poles interviewed expressed negative opinions towards Jewish communities. Ideological leanings to the right were indicators of increased unfavourability towards Muslims.⁴⁰ To understand this topic in more depth, researchers constructed an index based relating to national identity, which included questions about language and being Christian. The most restrictive views came from Hungary, Greece, Poland, and Italy.⁴¹ The importance of religion in nationality is also a partisan issue, with a stark divide between the left and right in Poland on this issue.⁴² People who expressed unfavourable views were also more likely to agree that refugees pose a threat. For example, just over half of Poles polled who expressed favourable views of Muslims had agreed that refugees pose a threat, this jumps to 81% amongst the Poles who

³¹ Nowaczek-Walczak, Magdalena. "The world of kebab Arabs and gastronomy in Warsaw." *Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe* (2011): 119.

³² *Ibid.* 120.

³³ Buchowski, Michał. "Making Anthropology Matter in the Heyday of Islamophobia and the 'Refugee Crisis': The Case of Poland." *Český lid: etnologický časopis (Český lid: Ethnological journal)* 103, no. 1 (2016): 57.

³⁴ Wasik, Zosia, and Henry Foy. "Poland favours christian refugees from Syria." *Financial Times* (2015).

³⁵ "Majority of Christian Syrian Refugees Left Poland." *Polskie Radio Dla Zagranicy*. Accessed November 8, 2017. <http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/238115,Majority-of-Christian-Syrian-refugees-left-Poland>.

³⁶ Bayraklı, Enes, and Farid Hafez, eds. "European islamophobia report 2015." SETA, 2016. Pp 429-430.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 438.

³⁸ "Why Are Polish People So Wrong About Muslims in Their Country?" *OpenDemocracy*. Accessed November 8, 2017. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/kasia-narkowicz-konrad-pedziwiatr/why-are-polish-people-so-wrong-about-muslims-in>.

³⁹ Wike, Richard, Bruce Stokes, and Katie Simmons. "Europeans fear wave of refugees will mean more terrorism, fewer jobs." *Pew Research Center* 11 (2016). 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 6.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 11.

⁴² *Ibid.* 22.

expressed unfavourable views of Muslims.⁴³ Outside of Hungary, Poles expressed the most concern (71%) that refugees will increase the risk of domestic terrorism.⁴⁴ Almost of a third of Poles agreed that Muslims in their country support ISIS, as a similar number declined to answer this question. As with other countries, Poles overwhelmingly agreed that refugees were 'drains' on the welfare system, but more Poles agreed that refugees were no more likely than other groups to commit a crime.⁴⁵

Perhaps these factors help explain how many Europeans uniformly overstate the size of their respective Muslim populations.⁴⁶ In Poland, researchers found that on average, Poles believed that of every 100 people, seven are Muslim. The reality is that this figure is under 0.1%. Regarding population shifts, Poles believed that Muslims would make up 13% of the population in 2020.⁴⁷ Pędziwiatr (2016) attributes this perception gap to the misinformation presented in sections of Polish press and by certain public figures.⁴⁸ An example cited by Pędziwiatr included the November-December front cover of the Catholic magazine, *Polonia Christiana*, which depicted a masked man holding explosives with the caption, 'Immigrants - Caliphate's Fifth Column'.⁴⁹ Hate crime figures cited in Pędziwiatr's report stated that around one-third of hate crime victims were Muslim (250 reports), 12% of victims were Jewish (102 cases), and 7.5% were Romani (65 reports).⁵⁰ A high profile hate crime took place near Warsaw when the Chilean pianist was assaulted by a group of skinheads who assumed he was Arab.⁵¹ Muslims were the biggest victims of hate speech in Poland in 2015 despite only accounting for 0.05% of the population, according to an analysis published in the *Financial Times* in September 2016.⁵²

Gawlewicz and Narkowicz (2015) highlight how the rich Islamic history of the region is ignored, demonstrating how this panic is a modern problem,⁵³ and reflective the political shifts in Poland in recent years, perhaps emboldening some of the individuals this paper will highlight later. Some of them are based in the UK and Poland, and this report will include a more detailed look at the views of Miriam Shaded, mentioned earlier. This next section, however, will touch on the historical interactions between Poles and their settled Muslim population the Tatars.

⁴³ Ibid. 29.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 30.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 32.

⁴⁶ Duncan, Pamela. "Europeans Greatly Overestimate Muslim Population, Poll Shows." *The Guardian*. Last modified December 14, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/datablog/2016/dec/13/europeans-massively-overestimate-muslim-population-poll-shows>.

⁴⁷ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/kasia-narkowicz-konrad-pedziwiatr/why-are-polish-people-so-wrong-about-muslims-in>

⁴⁸ Bayraklı, Enes, and Farid Hafez, eds. "European islamophobia report 2016." SETA, 2017. 418.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 418.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 434.

⁵¹ "Chilean Pianist Performs in Poland After Being Beaten for 'looking Like an Arab'." *The Guardian*. Last modified March 1, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/29/christiano-ramos-poland-chilean-pianist-beaten-arab-concert>.

⁵² Foy, H and Wasik, Z (2016). "Immigrants Pay for Poland's Fiery Rhetoric." *Financial Times*. Last modified September 15, 2016. <https://www.ft.com/content/9c59ba54-6ad5-11e6-a0b1-d87a9fea034f>.

⁵³ Gawlewicz, Anna, and Kasia Narkowicz. "Islamophobia on the move: Circulation of anti-Muslim prejudice between Poland and the UK." (2015): 93.

The Tatar Muslims of Poland

The arrival of Tatars is tied to the Mongols Golden Horde who arrived in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the 1300s. They were called Polish Tatars or Polish-Lithuanian Tatars, despite their Turkic-speaking and who practised the Hanafi form of Sunni Islam. They soon adapted to their new homeland through military service in exchange for land to settle on and the freedom to practise their faith. In 1569, for example, the parliament of nobility approved the construction of Tatar schools and mosques.⁵⁴ By the seventeenth century, 15,000 Tatars settled in 60 villages with mosques in Poland and Lithuania.⁵⁵ During a period of great societal flux, there was little evidence of community tensions outside of the destruction of a Tatar mosque in 1609, thanks to the Islamophobic incitement of Catholic priests, and the distribution of an Islamophobic leaflet called *Alfurkan tatarski* ('Tatar Alfurqan').⁵⁶ Towards the middle period of this century, census data put the Tatar population above 100,000.⁵⁷ Some authors, including Połczyński (2015), have critiqued the national historiographies of cultural harmony with Tatars in this historical juncture, which excludes or overlooks the Lipka Tatar rebellion of 1672, where thousands defected to the Ottoman Empire. King Jan III Sobieski forgave most of the rebels, allowing them to resettle in Polish territory.⁵⁸ Szajkowski (1999), meanwhile, noted how Tatar communities were further 'Polonized' in the seventeenth century through inter-marriage and the adoption of local vernaculars.⁵⁹ Polish Tatars also fought in battles against the Ottoman Empire, famously in the Battle of Vienna on 12 October 1683 and Battle of Parnaky in modern-day Slovakia on 7-8 October 1683.⁶⁰ The Third Partition of Poland in 1795 saw the lands of the Tatars absorbed into the Russian Empire.⁶¹ Tatars swore allegiance to Poland on copies of the Qur'an and units of Tatar soldiers took part in various uprisings against Russia.⁶² After Poland regained independence in 1918, border changes meant that only a small number of Tatar enclaves remained within Polish territory, with the Tatar population dropping to 5,000⁶³ or 5,500⁶⁴. There are examples of Polish Tatar units fighting Bolshevik forces during the Russian Civil War.⁶⁵ In contrast, the Bolsheviks promised an era of 'Muslim Communism' in the Caucasus and Central Asia, appointing Tatar Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev the Commissariat for Muslim Affairs. This promise never materialised,⁶⁶ and Sultan-Galiev soon fell out of favour with the Bolsheviks, living the life of an outcast, before his arrest and execution on 28 January 1940 in Moscow.⁶⁷

⁵⁴ Szajkowski, B. "An Old Muslim Community of Poland: The Tatars." *ISIM Newsletter* 4 (1999): 27.

⁵⁵ Robertson Huffnagle, Holly. "Muslims in the Middle: Islam's Faithful Few in the Polish Kresy, 1919-1939." GOSECA Conference February 20-21, 2015. 3.

⁵⁶ Dziekan, Marek M. "History and culture of Polish Tatars." *Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe* (2011): 27

⁵⁷ Szajkowski, B. "An Old Muslim Community of Poland: The Tatars." *ISIM Newsletter* 4 (1999): 27.

⁵⁸ Połczyński, Michael. "Seljuks on the Baltic: Polish-Lithuanian Muslim Pilgrims in the Court of Ottoman Sultan Süleyman I." *Journal of early modern history* 19, no. 5 (2015): 6.

⁵⁹ Szajkowski, B. "An Old Muslim Community of Poland: The Tatars." *ISIM Newsletter* 4 (1999): 27.

⁶⁰ Svanberg, Ingvar, and David Westerlund. *Muslim Tatar Minorities in the Baltic Sea Region*. Brill, 2016. 46.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 47.

⁶² Szajkowski, B. "An Old Muslim Community of Poland: The Tatars." *ISIM Newsletter* 4 (1999): 27.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Miśkiewicz, Ali. "Tatarzy polscy 1918–1939." *Życie społeczno-kulturalne i religijne* (1990).

⁶⁵ Svanberg, Ingvar, and David Westerlund. *Muslim Tatar Minorities in the Baltic Sea Region*. Brill, 2016. 47.

⁶⁶ John T. Sidel. "Opinion | What Killed the Promise of Muslim Communism?" *The New York Times*. Last modified October 9, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/09/opinion/muslim-communism.html>.

⁶⁷ Egan, David R., and Melinda A. Egan. *Joseph Stalin: an annotated bibliography of English-language periodical literature to 2005*. Scarecrow Press, 2007. 211.

During the interwar years, while privileging Catholicism, the Polish state formally recognised Islam in 1936.⁶⁸ A year earlier, a squadron of Tatarian formed with the religious protection of Dr Ali Woronowicz, an imam in Poland's capital of Warsaw, who went on to serve as the General Imam of the Polish Army.⁶⁹ Polish Tatars served in all units of the Polish army during the Second World War.⁷⁰ Tragedy would befall Tatars scattered in other parts of Europe in this period. In 1944, Stalin ordered the deportation of 200,000 Tatar men, women and children to the Gulag in Siberia and Central Asia.⁷¹ Around a third or almost half of the Tatars deported died on route. The totalitarian Soviet state accused the Tatars of collaborating with Nazi Germany, but historians accept that many had little choice but to comply out of fear of reprisal violence.⁷²

The borders of Poland were redrawn after the Second World War, leaving only two Tatar villages, in Bohoniki and Kruszyniany, inside Polish territory, as others moved to Warsaw. Land seizures by the Soviet Union forced some Tatar communities to relocate within these new borders. The Tatar population within Poland is estimated to have declined from around 5,000 to 3,000-3,5000 in this post-war period.⁷³ Łyszczarz's research also highlights how parts of the Tatar community moved away from its cultural traditions, perhaps from Islam, and through assimilation to Polish culture, a multifaceted identity was born.⁷⁴ Others retained their Islamic identity, within this prolonged process of inter-marriage and assimilation. This acceptance means that Tatars often maintain a flexible yet self-disciplined approach to religiosity.⁷⁵ This flexibility also extends to interfaith dialogue, most noted in the work of the Common Council of Catholics and Muslims (*Rada Wspólna Katolików i Muzułmanów*).⁷⁶

Other Muslim communities suffered under Soviet rule, including the destruction of mosques and the forced exile or killing of religious leaders, according to the Grand Mufti of Lithuania, Ramadan Yaqoob.⁷⁷ Nor were conditions under Communist control easy for Poland's Muslim minority. For example, their official public body, the Muslim Religious Union did face intense scrutiny, but other localised projects did spring up in this period.⁷⁸ During this historical period, where the Communist maintained positive relations with some Muslim-majority states, Poland did see an increase in students arrive in the 1970s and 1980s, with

⁶⁸ Nalborczyk, Agata S., and Paweł Borecki. "Relations between Islam and the state in Poland: the legal position of Polish Muslims." *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22, no. 3 (2011): 343-359.

⁶⁹ "Islam in Poland." Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Riyadh. Accessed November 9, 2017.

http://riyadh.mfa.gov.pl/en/bilateral_cooperation/poland/islam_in_poland/.

⁷⁰ Svanberg, Ingvar, and David Westerlund. *Muslim Tatar Minorities in the Baltic Sea Region*. Brill, 2016. 47.

⁷¹ "Behind the Headlines: Who Are the Crimean Tatars?" Latest Stories. Last modified March 15, 2014.

<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/03/140314-crimea-tatars-referendum-russia-muslim-ethnic-history-culture/>.

⁷² Harris, James. "The History Behind Ukraine Eurovision Song About Stalin's Deportation of Crimean Tatars." *The Conversation*. Accessed November 9, 2017. <http://theconversation.com/the-history-behind-ukraine-eurovision-song-about-stalins-deportation-of-crimean-tatars-55267>.

⁷³ Łyszczarz, Michał. "Generational changes among young Polish Tatars." *Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe* (2011): 53.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 58-59

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 58-59.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 60.

⁷⁷ "The Amazing Survival of the Baltic Muslims." *BBC News*. Last modified January 1, 2016.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-35170834>.

⁷⁸ Svanberg, Ingvar, and David Westerlund. *Muslim Tatar Minorities in the Baltic Sea Region*. Brill, 2016. 48.

distinct groups of professionals and political refugees arriving in the decade ahead.⁷⁹ Syrian, Iraqi and Libyan immigrants saw Poland as a cheap place to study and work, some returned home, others settled in Poland. In 1990, for example, a new brick-built mosque opened in Gdańsk.⁸⁰ After 1989, many new Muslim groups began to appear in Poland, including the Shiite Association of Muslim Unity, the Association of Muslim Students.⁸¹

The Russian invasion of Chechnya in 1994 which resulted in a humiliating defeat of Russian forces in 1996⁸², saw thousands of Chechnyan refugees enter Poland. Buchowski (2016) states that Poland accepted 80,000 such refugees, albeit on a temporary basis, since the conflict began, with many either returning to the Russian Federation or other parts of Europe, with only around 7,000 to 8,000 settling in Poland.⁸³ The Society for Threatened Peoples has criticised the Polish state in recent years for its treatment of refugees in Chechnya, including the lack of home visitation from doctors and inadequate medical care for children.⁸⁴ Many Chechens left Poland citing a lack of legal protection or status.⁸⁵

Warsaw has always been a popular hub for Polish Muslims is now home to several thousand Muslims, with many today from Turkey, Syria, Pakistan, and Chechnya. Others will have converted on their own or through marriage.⁸⁶ Many of the settled communities have taken Polish citizenship and retain a sense of identity which fuses both cultural identities. There are community organisations with Warsaw to support the integration of Somali communities, who, despite their small numbers, have gained a disproportionate focus in the Polish media on incidents abroad, with a large number of news articles focusing on piracy and poverty and terrorism.⁸⁷ The Foundation for Somalia, in Warsaw, offers free Polish language courses but are often over-subscribed and unable to meet demand.⁸⁸ Many speak of the systemic barriers of racial discrimination that make it hard to find meaningful work, and for refugees, the financial support is meagre, with stipends ending two months after a successful application.⁸⁹

If the sections above illuminated a sense of the history of Islam in Poland and its rich diversity today, the next small section will detail the importance of engaging and empowering

⁷⁹ Pędziwiatr, Konrad. "The Established and Newcomers" in Islam in Poland or the intergroup relations within the Polish Muslim Community." Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe (2011): 172.

⁸⁰ Nalborczyk, Agata S. "Mosques in Poland. Past and present." Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe (2011): 186.

⁸¹ Włoch, Renata. "Islam in Poland: Between ethnicity and universal umma." International Journal of Sociology 39, no. 3 (2009): 59.

⁸² "BBC NEWS | Europe | Q&A: The Chechen Conflict." Home - BBC News. Accessed November 10, 2017. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3293441.stm>.

⁸³ Buchowski, Michał. "Making Anthropology Matter in the Heyday of Islamophobia and the 'Refugee Crisis': The Case of Poland." Český lid: etnologický časopis (Český lid: Ethnological journal) 103, no. 1 (2016): 56-57.

⁸⁴ Waschewko, Jenia (2011). "The Situation of Chechen Refugees in Poland. Human Rights Issues – A Report by the Society for Threatened Peoples," January 2011. 6.

⁸⁵ Rozumek, Martin. "Chechen refugees denied access to Europe." Forced Migration Review 23 (2005): 39-41.

⁸⁶ "Poland's Muslims Thrive in Tiny Warsaw Community | Europe | DW | 02.11.2008." DW.COM. Accessed November 10, 2017. <http://www.dw.com/en/polands-muslims-thrive-in-tiny-warsaw-community/a-3750940>.

⁸⁷ Walczak, Gawel. "Muhammad in Warsaw, or a few words about Warsaw's Somalis." Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe (2011): 142-143.

⁸⁸ "Poland: No Paradise for Migrants." EUobserver. Accessed November 10, 2017. <https://euobserver.com/beyond-brussels/129694>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

Polish communities within Britain against anti-Muslim narratives, supporting Polish Muslims in Britain, and working towards a more tolerant and pluralistic goal.

Since the ascension of Poland to the European Union in 2004, one of the largest migratory shifts in Europe has occurred between the UK and Poland.⁹⁰ Subsequent research has explored how attitudes towards Muslim people 'are shaped and reproduced through international mobility'.⁹¹ A key finding in this research is that Polish migrants often discussed their attitudes, be it positive or negative, with family members or peers.⁹² In one example, researchers noted how a woman had internalised her brother's anti-Muslim views about Muslims in England despite her lack of contact with Muslims in Poland.⁹³ The mobility of Islamophobia, as argued by Gawlewicz and Narkowicz (2015), demonstrates how ideas proliferate beyond traditional borders within intimate familial and peer environments⁹⁴, which is why the section below will identify key ideologues of concern for Polish communities both here in the UK and in Poland.

The surprise election of the ultra-conservative Law and Justice Party (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) in October 2015 demonstrates the reinvigorated the role of Catholicism in political and public life in a country where 90% of the population identify with the church.⁹⁵ The PiS secured 235 seats in the 460-seat lower house of Poland's parliament, securing a ruling majority, and a desire to reshape Polish society through the lens of traditional Catholic conservative morality.⁹⁶ Some PiS supporters saw their vote as a religious choice not driven by politics.⁹⁷ The illiberal impulses of this form of populism⁹⁸ have resulted in the purging state-run corporations, the seizure of the secret service, and the neutering of the nation's highest court.⁹⁹ The purge has extended to the country's state-run media and radio outlets. Opposition press saw a fall in their advertising revenue as the PiS attempts to affirm the position of the Polish-run press in opposition to the privately-run and German-owned media which did command a larger market share in 2015.¹⁰⁰ Amid great public opposition to such

⁹⁰ Drinkwater, Stephen, John Eade, and Michal Garapich. "What's behind the figures? An investigation into recent Polish migration to the UK." *A continent moving west* (2010): 73-88.

⁹¹ Gawlewicz, Anna, and Kasia Narkowicz. "Islamophobia on the move: Circulation of anti-Muslim prejudice between Poland and the UK." (2015): 91.

⁹² *Ibid.* 95-96.

⁹³ *Ibid.* 96.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 96-97.

⁹⁵ "Polish Vote Marks Resurgence of Conservative Catholic Values." U.K. Last modified October 27, 2015. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-poland-election-church/polish-vote-marks-resurgence-of-conservative-catholic-values-idUKKCN0SL1B720151027>.

⁹⁶ "Rightwing Law and Justice Party Wins Overall Majority in Polish Election." *The Guardian*. Last modified May 7, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/27/poland-law-justice-party-wins-235-seats-can-govern-alone>.

⁹⁷ Alex Duval Smith. "In Deepest Rural Poland, Politics is Shaped by Love of Church ? and Hatred of Brussels." *The Guardian*. Last modified May 17, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/25/law-and-justice-poland-drift-to-right>.

⁹⁸ Populism requires the demarcation of society along the lines of 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite', defined in opposition to what they are not. The impulses are not strictly anti-democratic, but hostile to liberal forms of democracy. See Mudde, C (2015). "Populism in Europe: a Primer." *OpenDemocracy*. Accessed November 13, 2017. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/cas-mudde/populism-in-europe-primer>.

⁹⁹ "Poland: An Inconvenient Truth." *Financial Times*. Last modified May 1, 2016. <https://www.ft.com/content/4344ca44-0b94-11e6-9cd4-2be898308be3>.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

changes, the Press Freedom Index has ranked Poland 54 in 2017, down from 46 a year earlier.¹⁰¹

Some, however, are benefiting from this sea change in the country's political landscape. The government allocated a 26m zloty (\$6.8m) payment linked to a controversial Catholic priest. Tadeusz Rydzyk heads the ultra-conservative Catholic radio show *Radio Maryja*, which has a long history of promoting antisemitism¹⁰² and Islamophobia.¹⁰³ In 2001, Rydzyk endorsed the League of Polish Families (LPR), an ethnocentrist extreme right-wing party, which helped them gain seats in the subsequent election.¹⁰⁴ Students at a journalism school run by Mr Rydzyk told the *Financial Times* that they anticipate finding jobs much easier in this reconstructed media landscape, which will respect 'Christian values' and strengthen family values.¹⁰⁵

The Politicisation of Catholicism

Catholicism, since the start of the twentieth century, became intertwined with Polish national identity, and an 'essential pillar' of the Polish character.¹⁰⁶ The competing political visions of Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski, one of multicultural nationalism and Catholicism in opposition to the use of Catholicism to justify a more homogenous society, both ideas came to define the national debate in the country in the interwar years (1918-1939).¹⁰⁷ Catholic antisemitism was prevalent in Polish political discourses in this period. Hagen (1996) outlined that Polish antisemitism in this interwar period bore the hallmarks of 'Catholic intolerance and the desperation-driven aggression of pre-industrial peasants and artisans'.¹⁰⁸ Antisemitism was the tool to disenfranchise Jewish communities socially, economically, and sometimes violently with the rise of the radical right, but such acts of antisemitic violence had widespread social acceptance, demonstrating the latent prejudice within Polish society.¹⁰⁹ Berend (2001) states that Dmowski's National Democratic Party, which welded itself to the extreme right in Poland, was one of the first parties in Europe to advocate antisemitic policies, an economic boycott and organised anti-Jewish pogroms.¹¹⁰ Dmowski's position as Foreign Minister gave succour to a movement he formed with other antisemites who attempted to institutionalise antisemitism through pseudoscience in 1923.¹¹¹ The political coup in May 1926 ushered in an era of conservative authoritarianism under the

¹⁰¹ "Poland: Media Freedom and Pluralism in Jeopardy | Reporters Without Borders." RSF. Accessed November 13, 2017. <https://rsf.org/en/poland>.

¹⁰² "Radio Maryja: 25 Years of Anti-Semitism." Anti-Defamation League. Accessed November 13, 2017. <https://www.adl.org/blog/radio-maryja-25-years-of-anti-semitism>.

¹⁰³ "Poland: An Inconvenient Truth." *Financial Times*. Last modified May 1, 2016. <https://www.ft.com/content/4344ca44-0b94-11e6-9cd4-2be898308be3>.

¹⁰⁴ Pankowski, Rafal. *The populist radical right in Poland: The patriots*. Routledge, 2010. 111.

¹⁰⁵ "Poland: An Inconvenient Truth." *Financial Times*. Last modified May 1, 2016. <https://www.ft.com/content/4344ca44-0b94-11e6-9cd4-2be898308be3>.

¹⁰⁶ Pankowski, Rafal. *The populist radical right in Poland: The patriots*. Routledge, 2010. 25.

¹⁰⁷ Resende, Madalena Meyer. *Catholicism and Nationalism: Changing Nature of Party Politics*. Routledge, 2014. 10.

¹⁰⁸ Hagen, William W. "Before the 'final solution': Toward a comparative analysis of political anti-Semitism in interwar Germany and Poland." *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 2 (1996): 360.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Berend, Ivan T. *Decades of crisis: central and eastern Europe before world war II*. Univ of California Press, 2001. 315.

¹¹¹ "Polish 'experts' Make Science of Antisemitism." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified December 12, 1923. <https://www.jta.org/1923/12/12/archive/polish-experts-make-science-of-antisemitism>.

leadership of Pilsudski. Within months, his political rival Dmowski had announced a new, secretive political party modelled on the Ku Klux Klan. The motto of this new party read 'Catholic religion, Polish nationality and dominance of Poles'.¹¹² Within a year, Dmowski, who pushed for the economic boycott of Jewish communities since 1912, stated that his slogan for upcoming election would be 'Boycott the Jews'.¹¹³ Despite the fervent antisemitism, ethnonationalists in Poland defined themselves in opposition to Hitler and Germany, by promoting their Catholic values and apparent rejection of scientific racism.¹¹⁴ The Pilsudski government and his successors implemented various antisemitic policies due to the confident and vocal opposition to the extreme and radical right. Some policies were still on the agenda as the Second World War began in 1939.¹¹⁵ The creation of the National Radical Camp (*Oboz Narodowo-Radykalny*, or ONR) fractured the unity of the antisemitic nationalist bloc in the Polish Senate, Dmowski, now the chief spokesman for this Endeks bloc attempted to curtail the growth of the ONR¹¹⁶ but never fully condemned their pro-Nazi machinations.¹¹⁷ In a few short months, the ONR had recruited a few thousand young men, holding uniformed marches with military discipline in cities like Warsaw, while its militia wing carried out acts of intimidation and violence. Polish socialists took to the streets in opposition.¹¹⁸

The assassination of Bronisław Pieracki, Minister of the Interior, in June 1934 by members of the far-right OUN (Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists)¹¹⁹, however, became a pretext for a government clampdown on the activities of the ONR. Within weeks, the government formally banned the ONR for inciting racial hatred and its threat to public security.¹²⁰ The Polish state went on to imprison political opponents from the left and right in the Bereza Kartuska internment camp in 1934.¹²¹ Others have likened Bereza Kartuska to a concentration camp.¹²² Prisoners included those affiliated to the offshoots of the ONR, including a pro-Franco Falangist group.¹²³

¹¹² "Roman Dmowski Forms a New Polish Party Modelled After Klan." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified December 7, 1926. <https://www.jta.org/1926/12/07/archive/roman-dmowski-forms-a-new-polish-party-modelled-after-klan>.

¹¹³ "Boycott of Jews to Be Issue of Nationalist Party in Polish Election." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified March 3, 1927. <https://www.jta.org/1927/03/03/archive/boycott-of-jews-to-be-issue-of-nationalist-party-in-polish-election>.

¹¹⁴ Hagen, William W. "Before the "final solution": Toward a comparative analysis of political anti-Semitism in interwar Germany and Poland." *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 2 (1996): 369-370.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* 361.

¹¹⁶ "Endeks Will Further Fight Against Jews." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified April 18, 1934. <https://www.jta.org/1934/04/18/archive/endeks-will-further-fight-against-jews>.

¹¹⁷ Kunicki, Mikołaj Stanisław. *Between the Brown and the Red: Nationalism, Catholicism, and Communism in Twentieth-Century Poland—The Politics of Bolesław Piasecki*. Ohio University Press, 2012. 24.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* 25-26.

¹¹⁹ Rudling, Per A. "The OUN, the UPA and the Holocaust: A Study in the Manufacturing of Historical Myths." *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies* 2107 (2011). 7.

¹²⁰ Kunicki, Mikołaj Stanisław. *Between the Brown and the Red: Nationalism, Catholicism, and Communism in Twentieth-Century Poland—The Politics of Bolesław Piasecki*. Ohio University Press, 2012. 26-27.

¹²¹ Stachura, Peter. *Poland in the twentieth century*. Springer, 1999. 33.

¹²² Zaprudnik, Jan. *Belarus: at a Crossroads in History*. Westview press, 1993. 85.

¹²³ Stachura, Peter. *Poland in the twentieth century*. Springer, 1999. 48.

The death of Pilsudski intensified aspects of Polish antisemitism, not just in its institutionalised discrimination which was state policy since the 1920s,¹²⁴ but in paroxysms of violence. Examples of antisemitic violence included how local newspapers in the city Rybnik, in the Polish part of Upper Silesia, mirrored Nazi propaganda, which resulted in an anti-Jewish riot against the 150 members of the Jewish community in a population of 25,000.¹²⁵ A bomb destroyed the clinical and medical offices of the Jewish Red Cross in Grodno as a bombing of a synagogue in Sosnowiecz caused structural damage, but caused no injuries.¹²⁶ In August 1936, a court in eastern Poland jailed twenty Jews for participating in a general strike following the verdict in the Przytyk pogrom trial. The courts had, in essence, blamed Jewish communities for the violence, with disproportionate prison sentences for Jewish individuals who fought back in self-defence, as thirty-nine of the forty-three Poles responsible for the violence were freed or given light sentences.¹²⁷ In that one year alone, there were 348 anti-Jewish incidents, including 21 mass attacks on Jewish communities, with far-right nationalists blamed for the murder of three Jewish people in Bialystok, in northeastern Poland.¹²⁸ One such example included a pogrom in Wysokie Mazowiecki, between Bialystok and Warsaw, which left over fifty Jews injured. Again, the source of the violence came from the extreme right nationalists in the Endeks.¹²⁹

The government created the Camp of National Unity (OZON) to counter the rise of the radical and extreme right. OZON, however, served to draft antisemitic legislation similar to the policies Germany, Romania, and Hungary passed throughout the 1930s.¹³⁰ By 1937, the National Party (*Stronnictwo Narodowe*), declared the Jews to be its 'chief enemy' and that 'its main aim and duty must be to remove the Jews from all spheres of social, economic, and cultural life in Poland'.¹³¹ On the eve of war in 1939, at an ideological level, the antisemitic pronouncements of the extreme right, the Catholic Church, and the Polish government were almost interchangeable.¹³² This focus on the extreme far-right in this period of Polish history is important, not just for historical memory, but how Polish society must reconcile its past, based on cycles of antisemitism and the sometimes violent treatment of its Jewish communities where ethnonational antisemitism was state policy, driven not just by Dmowski and his Endeks. The ONR while short-lived, proved popular enough to concern Dmowski, who feared a fracture in ethnonationalist circles, but their collective pressure, be it through violence on the country's streets, or through political lobbying, forced the Pilsudski regime to adopt anti-Jewish legislation. Modern versions of the ethnonationalist radical and extreme

¹²⁴ Hagen, William W. "Before the 'final solution': Toward a comparative analysis of political anti-Semitism in interwar Germany and Poland." *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 2 (1996): 372.

¹²⁵ "Rybnik Riot on Nazi Plan Stirrs Poland." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified July 18, 1935. <https://www.jta.org/1935/07/18/archive/rybnik-riot-on-nazi-plan-stirs-poland>.

¹²⁶ "Anti-jewish Reign of Terror Gains Headway in Poland." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified March 17, 1936. <https://www.jta.org/1936/03/17/archive/anti-jewish-reign-of-terror-gains-headway-in-poland>.

¹²⁷ "Jail Terms for 20 Polish Jews Who Protested Przytyk Verdict." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified August 18, 1936. <https://www.jta.org/1936/08/18/archive/jail-terms-for-20-polish-jews-who-protested-przytyk-verdict>.

¹²⁸ "Premier Threatens Endeks; Cites 348 Attacks, 3 Deaths in Bialystok Are." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified January 15, 1937. <https://www.jta.org/1937/01/15/archive/premier-threatens-endeks-cites-348-attacks-3-deaths-in-bialystok-are>.

¹²⁹ "Over 50 Jews Wounded in Polish Pogrom." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified September 16, 1936. <https://www.jta.org/1936/09/16/archive/over-50-jews-wounded-in-polish-pogrom>.

¹³⁰ Hagen, William W. "Before the 'final solution': Toward a comparative analysis of political anti-Semitism in interwar Germany and Poland." *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 2 (1996): 372.

¹³¹ *Ibid.* 371.

¹³² *Ibid.* 374.

right, the National-Radical Camp (ONR), the National Movement (RN) and the All-Polish Youth (MW), are derived from the groups active before the Second World War.¹³³ Amnesty International described the All-Polish Youth as an 'extremist homophobic grouping'¹³⁴ after members attacked individuals at LGBT rallies in Poland in 2005 and 2006. Human Rights Watch penned an open letter to the President of Poland to condemn the anti-LGBT violence and abuse.¹³⁵

Catholicism & Ethnonationalism under Communism

Communist regimes across Europe enshrined the pre-existing ethnonationalism in legal and political frameworks. It resulted in the privileging of ethnic homogeneity which created a hostile environment for Polish Jews, resulting in the forced emigration of 15-20,000 in 1968 and 1969, consolidating a framework that the modern far-right exploit in Poland.¹³⁶ Another key factor in the deep political divides in Polish society concerned the role of the Catholic Church, not just under communism, but its overreaching hand in post-Solidarity politics in the 1990s. Under Communism, the Catholic Church positioned itself as a mediator between Polish citizenry and the regime, affirming its position as a guardian of Polish identity and moral life, which according to Prizel, despite facing state oppression, the Church did not adopt revolutionary ideas like liberation theology.¹³⁷ The Catholic Church in Poland was able to identify the struggle for national survival with Catholicism, positioning the church as a protective figure against national assault.¹³⁸

Some have even speculated about the role of Poland's first Pope, John Paul II in the fall of communism¹³⁹, as other Polish priests aligned with the pro-democracy Solidarity movement, sometimes at a personal cost.¹⁴⁰ The fall of Communism in Poland presented the church with an opportunity to increase its influence in the political sphere.¹⁴¹ The presidential elections in 1995 demonstrate how the Catholic Church in Poland demanded a candidate 'who will defend ethical and evangelical values', endorsing a candidate with little political traction, and therefore switching support to the incumbent President Wałęsa. Various archbishops attacked his rival candidate, attacking his secular attitudes, and apparent

¹³³ Deutsche Welle (www.dw.com). "Poland Independence Day: Thousands Take Part in Far-right Rally | News | DW | 11.11.2017." DW.COM. Accessed November 15, 2017. <http://www.dw.com/en/poland-independence-day-thousands-take-part-in-far-right-rally/a-41343896>.

¹³⁴ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Amnesty International Report 2006 - Poland." Refworld. Accessed November 17, 2017. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/447ff7b511.html>.

¹³⁵ "Poland: Official Homophobia Threatens Human Rights." Human Rights Watch. Last modified February 14, 2006. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2006/02/14/poland-official-homophobia-threatens-human-rights>.

¹³⁶ Pankowski, Rafał, and Marcin Kormak. "Radical nationalism in Poland: From theory to practice." *RIGHT-WING IN EUROPE* (2013): 6.

¹³⁷ Prizel, Ilya. *National identity and foreign policy: nationalism and leadership in Poland, Russia and Ukraine*. Vol. 103. Cambridge University Press, 1998. 89-90.

¹³⁸ Resende, Madalena Meyer. *Catholicism and Nationalism: Changing Nature of Party Politics*. Routledge, 2014. Xiv.

¹³⁹ "John Paul II And The Fall Of Communism | John Paul II - The Millennial Pope | FRONTLINE | PBS." PBS: Public Broadcasting Service. Accessed November 13, 2017. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/pope/communism/>.

¹⁴⁰ Szporer, Michael. "Managing religion in communist-era Poland: Catholic priests versus the secret police." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 3 (2010): 115.

¹⁴¹ Resende, Madalena Meyer. *Catholicism and Nationalism: Changing Nature of Party Politics*. Routledge, 2014. Xiv.

Godlessness, linking him directly to Marx and Lenin.¹⁴² Some in the church equated Wałęsa's eventual electoral defeat with the 'moral sickness' of secular politics, concluding that only a theocracy could be morally healthy.¹⁴³ A major debate in Poland a year later demonstrated how the Church began to view itself as a 'nation-forming Church' with the capacity to veto issues like abortion.¹⁴⁴ Such political interventions had deeper, lasting consequences in Poland. It created a symbiotic relationship between religion and nationalism which deepened socio-cultural divides.¹⁴⁵

Nor had elements of the church addressed the antisemitic attitudes of some priests. Most notably, in 1995, Father Henryk Jankowski, a hero of the Solidarity movement a decade earlier, declared that Jews had a role in Nazism and communism, and were responsible for the injustices of capitalism, was later disciplined by the Catholic Church.¹⁴⁶ The fiftieth anniversary of Auschwitz death camp did change more general attitudes towards Jewish communities among Poles.¹⁴⁷ Father Jankowski once decorated his church at Easter with the slogan 'The Jews killed Jesus and the prophets and persecuted us as well'.¹⁴⁸ This Church-affiliated form of antisemitism proliferated in the post-communist era thanks to the success of *Radio Maryja* in 1991, which was highlighted earlier in the report. At its height, the radio show attracted over 10% of Poles, but its audience shares have declined somewhat.¹⁴⁹ The power, and enduring appeal for its listeners to talk to the radio show and express their antisemitic views without censure, despite the hosts going to great lengths to not broadcast or refer to overt antisemitic and xenophobic discourses. Rather, the show goes to great lengths to equate the suffering of the Jews with that of Poland, which propagates an exclusionary form of nationalism that has Catholicism at its core.¹⁵⁰ If sections of wider Polish society could resist such forms of antisemitism, the extreme right, however, embraces it.¹⁵¹¹⁵² Their hatred of communism and capitalism recycles antisemitic discourses around Freemasonry which fuses with an innately violent desire to remove perceived cultural threats from society.¹⁵³

¹⁴² Ramet, Sabrina P. *Whose democracy?: Nationalism, religion, and the doctrine of collective rights in post-1989 Eastern Europe*. Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. 106.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* 107.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 108.

¹⁴⁵ Resende, Madalena Meyer. *Catholicism and Nationalism: Changing Nature of Party Politics*. Routledge, 2014. 4.

¹⁴⁶ East, Roger, and Jolyon Pontin. *Revolution and Change in Central and Eastern Europe: Revised Edition*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016. 27.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ "Henryk Jankowski, Priest Disciplined for Anti-Semitism, Dies." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified July 14, 2010. <https://www.jta.org/2010/07/14/news-opinion/world/henryk-jankowski-priest-disciplined-for-anti-semitism-dies>.

¹⁴⁹ Rosenfeld, Alvin H., ed. *Resurgent antisemitism: Global perspectives*. Indiana University Press, 2013. 258-259.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 259-260.

¹⁵¹ Small, Charles Asher, ed. *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2013. 305-309.

¹⁵² Ramet, Sabrina P., ed. *Radical Right in Central and Eastern Europe since 1989*. Penn State Press, 2010. 89.

¹⁵³ Pankowski, Rafał, and Marcin Kormak. "Radical nationalism in Poland: From theory to practice." *RIGHT-WING IN EUROPE* (2013): 159.

The extreme right did find parliamentary representation under the banner of the League of Polish Families, which gained 7.87% of the vote in 2001.¹⁵⁴ In May 2006, it was a junior coalition partner with the Law and Justice party (PiS).¹⁵⁵ Pankowski and Kormak (2013) argue that the PiS had absorbed this far-right surge by appealing to their illiberal desires.¹⁵⁶ A strategic alliance between *Radio Maryja* and the PiS helped get far-right activists elected to parliament between 2007 and 2011.¹⁵⁷ During this period, the Independence Day marches organised by the All-Polish Youth and the National Radical Camp became a key focus for far-right activism. In 2012, for example, riots broke out in Warsaw,¹⁵⁸ and the event brought together far-right nationalists from a range of European countries.¹⁵⁹ A year later and police detained seventy-two far-right protesters as the violence left twelve police officers and nineteen protesters injured.¹⁶⁰ The National Independence Day march in 2014 passed without incident until a large group of masked men separated from the main crowds and attacked police officers.¹⁶¹ According to reports, police arrested over 276 protesters in violence which left fifty officers injured.¹⁶² It was the fourth successive year where violence has occurred during the march.¹⁶³ The National Independence Day march of 2015 drew 35,000 to Warsaw, in what the Financial Times described it as the far-right's show of strength.¹⁶⁴ Representatives from the antisemitic Jobbik party of Hungary attended, as did members of Italy's neo-fascist Forza Nuova.¹⁶⁵ The protesters marched under the banner of the antisemitic pre-war slogan "Poland for Poles. Poles for Poland."¹⁶⁶ A year later and the Interior Ministry estimated that 75,000 people joined the march, while Warsaw's city hall put the figure at 60,000 as counter-protests drew between 10,000 and 27,000, according to local

¹⁵⁴ "POLAND: Parliamentary Elections Sejm, 2001." Inter-Parliamentary Union. Accessed November 17, 2017. http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2255_01.htm.

¹⁵⁵ "CHRONOLOGY: Polish Coalition's Bumps and Bruises." U.S. Last modified July 9, 2007. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-poland-government-factbox/chronology-polish-coalitions-bumps-and-bruises-idUSL0918465320070709>.

¹⁵⁶ Pankowski, Rafał, and Marcin Kormak. "Radical nationalism in Poland: From theory to practice." *RIGHT-WING IN EUROPE* (2013): 162.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ "Polish Demonstrators, Police Clash on Independence Day." U.K. Last modified November 11, 2011. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-poland-clashes/polish-demonstrators-police-clash-on-independence-day-idUKTRE7AA5BQ20111111>.

¹⁵⁹ Pankowski, Rafał, and Marcin Kormak. "Radical nationalism in Poland: From theory to practice." *RIGHT-WING IN EUROPE* (2013): 163.

¹⁶⁰ Deutsche Welle (www.dw.com). "Russia Demands Polish Apology for Riot Damage | News | DW | 12.11.2013." DW.COM. Accessed November 17, 2017. <http://www.dw.com/en/russia-demands-polish-apology-for-riot-damage/a-17221025>.

¹⁶¹ "Poland Clashes During Independence Day Celebrations." Telegraph.co.uk. Last modified November 12, 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/poland/11225433/Poland-clashes-during-independence-day-celebrations.html>.

¹⁶² "Violence Blights Nationalist March in Warsaw." Polskie Radio Dla Zagranicy. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://www.thenews.pl/1/9/Artykul/186988,Violence-blights-nationalist-march-in-Warsaw>.

¹⁶³ "Clashes at Poland Independence March." BBC News. Last modified November 11, 2014. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-30012830>.

¹⁶⁴ "Polish Nationalists Rail Against Brussels in Show of Strength." Financial Times. Last modified November 11, 2015. <https://www.ft.com/content/67618b9e-8893-11e5-90de-f44762bf9896>.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ "Poland Commemorates Independence Day." Polskie Radio Dla Zagranicy. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://www.thenews.pl/1/9/Artykul/228422,Poland-commemorates-Independence-Day>.

estimates.¹⁶⁷ The 2017 march made international headlines after 60,000 attended the march. Various media outlets had to correct their coverage after erroneous reports suggested that protesters had unveiled a banner which read 'Pray for an Islamic Holocaust' on a bridge.¹⁶⁸ The banner was hung from a bridge in the western city of Poznań in 2015.¹⁶⁹ EU lawmakers expressed their concerns about the scale of the nationalist rally, forcing some within the ruling PiS party to condemn the racist banners but Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski denied witnessing any antisemitic banners at the march.¹⁷⁰ Polish authorities have now launched an investigation into whether or not statements from the far-right groups present on the march had breached laws on propagating racism. The offences are punishable by up to two years in prison.¹⁷¹ Michael Schudrich, the country's chief rabbi, had a 'frank' talk with ruling party leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski, and according to a statement released by the Jewish community of Poland, Kaczynski had 'strongly opposed' the statements on display.¹⁷²

In late November, vandals broke around a dozen windows at a mosque in Warsaw.¹⁷³ Youssef Chadid, a community leader, told the media that it was a racist, anti-Muslim attack, adding that an 'unfavourable' climate in Poland towards Muslims and called on the government to condemn anti-Muslim attacks.¹⁷⁴ Leaders of Poland's Jewish community wrote to mufti Tomasz Miśkiewicz to condemn the growing hostility and violence towards religious and cultural minorities in Poland.¹⁷⁵ Prosecutors in Poland are now investigating the independence day march to see if statements made broke any laws around propagating racism. The public propagation of 'of fascism and calls for hatred' can result in a two-year prison sentence.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁷ "75,000 Far-right Nationalists March on Poland's Independence Day." New York Post. Last modified November 11, 2016. <https://nypost.com/2016/11/11/75000-far-right-nationalists-march-on-polands-independence-day/>.

¹⁶⁸ "WSJ Admits to Mistake in Coverage of Warsaw's Independence March." Polskie Radio Dla Zagranicy. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/335568,WSJ-admits-to-mistake-in-coverage-of-Warsaws-Independence-March>.

¹⁶⁹ KARC. ""Módlcie Si? O Islamski Holocaust". Transparent Nad Ulic? Hetma?sk? W Poznaniu." Polskatimes.pl. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://www.polskatimes.pl/artykul/9094846,modlcie-sie-o-islamski-holocaust-transparent-nad-ulica-hetmanska-w-poznaniu,id,t.html>.

¹⁷⁰ "EU Cranks Up Criticism of Poland over Court Reforms, Nationalist Rally." U.K. Last modified November 15, 2017. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-eu-poland-judiciary/eu-cranks-up-criticism-of-poland-over-court-reforms-nationalist-rally-idUKKBN1DF1TC>.

¹⁷¹ "Prosecutors Open Probe into Possible 'public Propagating of Fascism' at Polish March." CBC News. Last modified November 20, 2017. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/poland-far-right-march-investigation-racism-1.4411060>.

¹⁷² "Polish Prosecutors Open Racism Probe of Far-right March." Yahoo. Last modified November 23, 2017. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/polish-prosecutors-open-probe-far-tight-march-165751305.html>.

¹⁷³ "Poland Probes Mosque Attack, Far-right ?Gallows? Protest." VOA. Last modified November 27, 2017. <https://www.voanews.com/a/poland-probes-mosque-attack-far-right-gallows-protest/4138965.html>.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ "Polish Jewish Leaders Offer Support After Attack on Warsaw Muslim Center." The Times of Israel | News from Israel, the Middle East and the Jewish World. Accessed December 3, 2017. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/polish-jewish-leaders-offer-support-after-attack-on-warsaw-muslim-center/>.

¹⁷⁶ "Prosecutors Open Probe into Possible 'public Propagating of Fascism' at Polish March." CBC News. Last modified November 20, 2017. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/poland-far-right-march-investigation-racism-1.4411060>.

Notable anti-Muslim activists in Poland and Britain

The section below will briefly discuss some of the important or notorious anti-Muslim ideologues and groups in Poland and the United Kingdom.

Miriam Shaded

Miriam Shaded, mentioned earlier in the report, was behind the attempted settlement of fifty Christian Syrian refugees in Poland in 2015, but most would leave Poland within months.¹⁷⁷ She made various anti-Muslim remarks when interviewed in the *Financial Times* which included the claim that many who practice Islam are 'criminals'.¹⁷⁸

The exodus of Christians from the Middle East, however, is of grave concern, with vast populations fleeing war and genocide in Syria and Iraq.¹⁷⁹ Between 1910 and 2010, the Christian population in the Middle East dropped from 14% to a mere 4%.¹⁸⁰ Experts cite violence, forced deportations, and discrimination as the drivers of this dramatic population shift. Irrespective of this fact, the anti-Muslim views of Ms Shaded are easy to find on her social media accounts, where she boasts almost 70,000 'likes' on Facebook, with a less popular English-language page gaining several hundred 'likes'. Mainstream Polish media, like *TVP1*, owned by the national public broadcaster have given her a public platform,¹⁸¹ and she has also spoken to other Polish media outlets, like *wRealu24*, about the alleged links between Islam and paedophilia.¹⁸²

Shaded has expressed support for Viktor Orbán's proposed ban on Islam in Hungary.¹⁸³ In other media, she said that the Qur'an is a book that calls for 'hatred and violence' and that the concept of Jihad is one of force and submission.¹⁸⁴ She appeared on the cover of the Polish weekly magazine *Wprost* in 2016, an English-language translation of this interview was uploaded online on 20 March 2016.¹⁸⁵ She used this interview to call for a ban on Islam in Poland, to praise the Assad regime for its liberal protection of Christians, including her relatives, and to warn that if 'Europe does not quickly wake up, it becomes Islamized'. She added that imams are instructing refugee men to enter Europe to conquer the region and

¹⁷⁷ "Majority of Christian Syrian Refugees Left Poland." Polskie Radio Dla Zagranicy. Accessed November 16, 2017. <http://www.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/238115,Majority-of-Christian-Syrian-refugees-left-Poland>.

¹⁷⁸ Wasik, Zosia, and Henry Foy. "Poland favours Christian refugees from Syria." *Financial Times* (2015).

¹⁷⁹ "War, Terrorism, and the Christian Exodus from the Middle East." *The New Yorker*. Accessed November 16, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/war-terrorism-and-the-christian-exodus-from-the-middle-east>.

¹⁸⁰ Griswold, Eliza. "Is This the End of Christianity in the Middle East?" *The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia*. Last modified July 22, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/26/magazine/is-this-the-end-of-christianity-in-the-middle-east.html>.

¹⁸¹ Miriam Shaded ENG's Facebook page. Accessed 16 November, 2017. https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=457917214567654&id=182683658757679

¹⁸² Miriam Shaded ENG's Facebook page. Accessed 16 November, 2017. https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=397490920610284&id=182683658757679

¹⁸³ Miriam Shaded ENG's Facebook page. Accessed 16 November, 2017. https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=236361806723197&id=182683658757679

¹⁸⁴ News, Blasting. "Miriam Shaded – a Woman with an Important Mission." *Blasting News*. Accessed November 16, 2017. <http://uk.blastingnews.com/europe/2016/11/miriam-shaded-a-woman-with-an-important-mission-001233625.html>.

¹⁸⁵ Miriam Shaded ENG's Facebook page. Accessed 16 November, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/notes/miriam-shaded-eng/my-interview-with-the-polish-magazine-wprostexclusively-translated-into-english/211600522532659/>

spread Islam.¹⁸⁶ She praised *Wprost* for not 'manipulating' her views on Facebook, adding, 'Ban Islam – let us defend ourselves, as long as it's not too late' on 7 March 2016.¹⁸⁷ She reinforced this argument in a promotional clip for an interview with the founder and former leader of the English Defence League Tommy Robinson on 15 November 2017.¹⁸⁸ She has also made headlines after boycotting a bottled water company which had used a crescent moon and stars to denote camping in its branding.¹⁸⁹ The conservative *Do Rzeczy* magazine put her on their front cover last September, which she encouraged supporters to purchase on her official Instagram page.¹⁹⁰

Piotr Rybak

The extremes of ethnonationalist fringe in Poland have gained notoriety in recent years, most notably in the actions of Piotr Rybak, of the *Wielka Polska Niepodległa* movement. In November 2015, during an anti-Muslim protest in Wrocław against Poland accepting Syrian refugees, Rybak burned an effigy of an Orthodox Jewish man.¹⁹¹ During the protest, most of which was captured on video and uploaded to YouTube, Rybak said, 'we will not bring a single Muslim into Poland, Poland is for Poles.'¹⁹² He then set fire to the effigy, which featured an EU flag.

National Radical Camp organised the protest and presented Rybak with the effigy to burn, but the courts rejected his claim that the effigy was of Hungarian-American Jewish philanthropist George Soros, finding him guilty of 'public incitement to hatred on the grounds of religion and nationality to an unspecified group of Jews by burning an effigy'.¹⁹³ The prison sentence given to Rybak fell to three months after an appeal. He is now threatening to sue Jewish leaders who called him 'a fascist, antisemite and stinking nationalist' in September 2017.¹⁹⁴ Months earlier, the far-right street defence movement and political party Britain First added him to an event on 24 June 2017, but Jacek Międlar, Piotr Rybak, and another

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Miriam Shaded ENG's Facebook page. Accessed 16 November, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/182683658757679/photos/a.202706953422016.1073741830.182683658757679/204241299935248>

¹⁸⁸ "Tommy Robinson Meets Miriam Shaded: "I Want to Outlaw Islam"." Tommy Robinson. Accessed November 16, 2017.

https://www.tommyrobinson.com/tommy_robinson_meets_miriam_shaded_i_want_to_outlaw_islam.

¹⁸⁹ "Miriam Shaded Oskar? a ?ywiec Zdrój O Promowanie Islamu." Newsweek.pl. Last modified July 18, 2017. <http://www.newsweek.pl/polska/ludzie/miriam-shaded-oskarza-zywiec-zdroj-o-promowanie-islam,artykuly,413351,1.html>.

¹⁹⁰ Miriam Shaded's Instagram page. Accessed 16 November, 2017.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BZa6rR3B6v>

¹⁹¹ "Pole Who Burned Haredi Effigy Says He'll Sue Jewish Leaders for Calling Him an Anti-Semite." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified September 6, 2017. <https://www.jta.org/2017/09/06/news-opinion/world/man-who-burned-effigy-of-jew-will-sue-polish-towns-jewish-leaders-for-calling-him-an-anti-semite>.

¹⁹² "Polish Man Charged with Burning Jew Effigy at Anti-Muslim Protest." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified March 4, 2016. <https://www.jta.org/2016/03/04/news-opinion/world/polish-man-charged-with-burning-jew-effigy-at-anti-muslim-protest>.

¹⁹³ "Polish Man Jailed for Burning Effigy of Ultra-Orthodox Jew." The Times of Israel | News from Israel, the Middle East and the Jewish World. Accessed November 16, 2017. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/polish-man-jailed-for-burning-effigy-of-ultra-orthodox-jew/>.

¹⁹⁴ "Pole Who Burned Effigy of Jew Will Sue Those Who Called Him Anti-Semitic." Jewish News. Last modified September 8, 2017. <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/pole-who-burned-effigy-jew-to-sue-those-who-called-him-anti-semitic/>.

unnamed Polish activist were detained in Birmingham airport hours before the event took place. Edwin Wagenveld, who leads the Netherlands chapter of the Islamophobic Pegida movement, was also prevented from attending.¹⁹⁵

Jacek Międlar

The notoriety of the disgraced former priest Jacek Międlar grew after he was detained at Stansted Airport to prevent him from attending a far-right rally in Telford, Shropshire in February 2017.¹⁹⁶ Międlar, 28, is an important fixture in the extreme right-wing political scene in Poland, and in Wrocław in west Poland.¹⁹⁷ Two years earlier, Międlar spoke at the far-right organised nationalist demonstration which marked the anniversary of Poland's independence after the First World War. Organisers claimed that 50,000 attended but police put the actual figure at 25,000 people.¹⁹⁸ Międlar's contrasted the love of Christianity with the apparent violence in Islam, he told the crowd, 'We do not want violence, we do not want aggression in the name of Allah.... We must oppose it. We do not want the hatred that is in the Koran'.¹⁹⁹ On the Polish Independence Day march on 11 November 2016, Międlar is alleged to have publicly called for hatred against Jews and Ukrainians.²⁰⁰ During the march, he is alleged to have said, 'We must be strong in spirit, body, in our mentality and knowledge, because only we will be able to win with the left, with Jewry, and with communism, which is still in our homeland'.²⁰¹ Months earlier, prosecutors dropped a hate crime investigation against Międlar, when during his sermon, described Jews as a 'cancer'.²⁰² He is also alleged to have uploaded a photo of Poles performing a Nazi salute during a pogrom in the southern town of Myślenice in 1936 which resulted in non-lethal violence and property damage to Jewish-owned businesses.²⁰³²⁰⁴²⁰⁵ Międlar has blogged

¹⁹⁵ Syal, Rajeev. "Far-right Activists Detained at UK Border Before Britain First Rally." The Guardian. Last modified July 5, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/24/far-right-activists-detained-at-uk-border-before-britain-first-rally>.

¹⁹⁶ Syal, Rajeev. "Far-right Polish Priest Detained at Stansted Airport." The Guardian. Last modified March 3, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/25/far-right-polish-priest-jacek-miedlar-detained-at-stansted-airport>.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ "EU Flag Burned As Tens of Thousands Join Warsaw Nationalist Demo." Telegraph.co.uk. Last modified November 12, 2015. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/poland/11989250/EU-flag-burned-as-tens-of-thousands-join-Warsaw-nationalist-demo.html>.

¹⁹⁹ "The Priest Who is the New Face of Polish Nationalism – Catholic World Report." Catholic World Report – Global Church News and Views. Last modified December 10, 2015. <http://www.catholicworldreport.com/2015/12/10/the-priest-who-is-the-new-face-of-polish-nationalism/>.

²⁰⁰ "Polish Former Priest Indicted for Inciting Hatred Against Jews." Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Last modified July 9, 2017. <https://www.jta.org/2017/07/09/news-opinion/world/polish-former-priest-indicted-for-inciting-hatred-against-jews>.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² "Polish Prosecutors Absolve Priest Who Called Jews 'cancer'." The Times of Israel | News from Israel, the Middle East and the Jewish World. Accessed November 16, 2017. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/polish-prosecutors-absolve-nationalist-priest-of-hate-crime-charge/>.

²⁰³ Ringelblum, Emanuel. Polish-Jewish Relations during the Second World War. Northwestern University Press, 1992. 12.

²⁰⁴ "Polish Priest Who Branded Jews As 'Cancer' Cleared of Hate Crime." The Forward. Last modified September 29, 2016. <http://forward.com/news/breaking-news/351081/polish-priest-who-branded-jews-as-cancer-cleared-of-hate-crime/>.

²⁰⁵ Spector, Shmuel, and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds. The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust: K-Sered. Vol. 2. NYU Press, 2001. 863.

about the 'Holocaust industry' and denies Poland's role in the Holocaust,²⁰⁶ yet he chose to lionise Witold Pilecki on the sixty-ninth anniversary of his death.²⁰⁷ Pilecki is a national hero in Poland, a man who, in 1940, snuck into Auschwitz to document the genocidal horrors of the Holocaust. He spent two and a half years inside the camp before his escape.²⁰⁸ As Timothy Snyder noted in the *New York Times*, Pilecki's 'definition of Polish identity was one of honor and dishonor', not the ethnonationalism so widespread in his homeland.²⁰⁹ Upon his return to his homeland, Pilecki found himself before the courts, accused of being an imperialist spy. The show trial soon 'exposed' his guilt, and his execution took place ten days later. The post-Solidarity government exonerated Pilecki in 1990.²¹⁰ As discussed earlier, the extreme right's rejection of communism derives from antisemitism²¹¹, meaning that Międlar's lionising of Pilecki serves to reinforce a mythologised form of nationhood where only the violent purging of so-called Jewish and other foreign influences can resolve this perpetual narrative of victimhood.

Marian Kowalski

Marian Kowalski came to prominence in the English-language media in 2015 following a series of counter-protests following his speaking tour in Ireland during his failed presidential campaign in Poland.²¹² Hotels in Dublin and Cork cancelled speaking events for Kowalski, who represents the far-right National Movement (*Ruch Narodowy*). In Dublin, the *Irish Times* reported that sixty anti-fascist protesters were involved in scuffles in the Ormond Quay area of the city, but police denied any such incidents had taken place.²¹³ The local press also reported that Ruch Narodowy has a chapter in Cork and members across Ireland.²¹⁴ Kowalski was once a spokesperson for the National Radical Camp (ODR).²¹⁵ A year earlier, on 9 April 2014, Ruch Narodowy brought together a host of far-right speakers from across Europe, in

²⁰⁶ "Far-right Polish priest barred from UK for second time this year." Accessed November 16, 2017.

<https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/far-right-polish-priest-barred-from-uk-for-second-time-this-year-1.440524>.

²⁰⁷ Międlar, Jacek. Twitter Post. May 25, 2017, 1:33 PM

<https://twitter.com/jacekmiedlar/status/867720233544450050>

²⁰⁸ "Meet The Man Who Sneaked Into Auschwitz." NPR.org. Last modified September 18, 2010.

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=129956107>.

²⁰⁹ Snyder, Timothy. "'The Auschwitz Volunteer,' by Witold Pilecki." The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia. Last modified June 22, 2012.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/24/books/review/the-auschwitz-volunteer-by-witold-pilecki.html>.

²¹⁰ David de Sola. "The Man Who Volunteered for Auschwitz." The Atlantic. Last modified November 16, 2017.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/10/the-man-who-volunteered-for-auschwitz/263083/>.

²¹¹ Pankowski, Rafał, and Marcin Kormak. "Radical nationalism in Poland: From theory to practice." RIGHT-WING IN EUROPE (2013): 157.

²¹² "Angry Polish Ultra-Nationalists Held Some Strange Meetings in Ireland." Vice. Last modified April 16, 2015.

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/gqmx87/polish-ultra-nationalists-weird-meeting-in-ireland-378.

²¹³ "Protest Mounted in Dublin Against Polish Far-right Event." The Irish Times. Last modified April 10, 2015.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/protest-mounted-in-dublin-against-polish-far-right-event-1.2171704>.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ "Your Guide to the 2015 Polish Presidential Election." The Krakow Post. Last modified May 8, 2015.

<http://www.krakowpost.com/9337/2015/05/your-guide-to-the-2015-polish-presidential-election>.

an event near the Polish parliament in Warsaw.²¹⁶ Marton Gyongyosi, one of the leaders of the antisemitic and anti-Roma, Jobbik in Hungary, was a keynote speaker for a crowd of around 150 largely white men in their 30s to 40s. Other extreme right parties from Bulgaria and Croatia were in attendance, where topics included conspiracies about Jewish communities and the European Union.²¹⁷

The far-right have adopted other tactics to disrupt liberal events, where topics included equal marriage and leading feminist academics in 2013, which drew praise from Artur Zawiska, who sat on the leadership of the National Movement.²¹⁸ The *Reuters* investigation²¹⁹ also detailed how the far-right in Poland fuses the traditional conservative values espoused in parliament, on mainstream television, and in Catholic sermons with the chanting of football hooligans who disguise their homophobia and antisemitism in anti-Communist chants.

Kowalski's views towards the building of new mosques in Poland reflects how anti-Muslim racism is often anti-Arab in focus. In a 2016 speech, he is reported to have told a crowd that Arab-funded mosques are 'breeding grounds' for terrorists.²²⁰ On Facebook, he shared a meme about how Poland violently dealt with the 'invasion' of Islam on 20 May 2017.²²¹ On Twitter, Kowalski compared Islam to a 'trojan horse'.²²² On 25 September 2016, he photographed a small rally in Trafalgar Square in London which called for the release of Janusz Waluś,²²³ a Polish white supremacist, who, in 1993, murdered the anti-apartheid hero and SACP leader Chris Hani.²²⁴ Waluś was a member of the leading neo-Nazi group in South Africa, the Afrikaner Resistance Movement, who hoped his actions would trigger a race war in the final days of apartheid.²²⁵

²¹⁶ "Special Report: From Hungary, Far-right Party Spreads Ideology, Tactics." U.K. Last modified April 9, 2014. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-europe-farright-special-report/special-report-from-hungary-far-right-party-spreads-ideology-tactics-idUKBREA380IU20140409>.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ "Polish Far-right "flash Mobs" Scare Liberal Thinkers." U.K. Last modified April 30, 2013. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-poland-farright/polish-far-right-flash-mobs-scare-liberal-thinkers-idUKBRE93TOBR20130430>.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ "Marian Kowalski: Żadnych Meczetów I Muzułmańskich Centrów Kultury! To Wylęgarnie Terrorystów – Prawy.pl." Prawy.pl - Portal Poświęcony Polsce, Rodzinie I Tradycji. Accessed November 17, 2017. <http://prawy.pl/35481-marian-kowalski-zadnych-meczetow-i-muzulmanskich-centrow-kultury-to-wylegarnie-terrorystow/>.

²²¹ Marian Kowalski's Facebook Page. Accessed November 23, 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/Kowalski.Marian/photos/a.361353880635852.1073741828.181063088664933/1087681538003079/>

²²² Kowalski, Marian. Twitter Post. September 20, 2017, 9:23 AM. <https://twitter.com/kowalskimarian/status/910419118314213376>

²²³ <https://www.facebook.com/Kowalski.Marian/photos/a.361353880635852.1073741828.181063088664933/887914564646445/>

²²⁴ "S.Africa Blocks Release of Anti-apartheid Hero Hani's Killer." Yahoo News UK. Accessed November 17, 2017. <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/africa-blocks-release-anti-apartheid-hero-hanis-killer-120023560.html>.

²²⁵ Atkins, Stephen E. *Encyclopedia of modern worldwide extremists and extremist groups*. Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004. 12.

Kowalski has also gained a reputation for his provocative stunts which included the burning of a rainbow flag in July 2015 following the U.S. Supreme Court ruling to legalise same same-sex marriage.²²⁶

On the refugee issue, he used his *Idź Pod Prąd TV* platform to label refugees as 'monkeys,' and suggested that individuals who support refugees require a 'punch in the face'. He added that politicians who accept refugees should be 'eliminated' from public life.²²⁷

Thanks to pressure from members of the Polish community in Britain, Ealing Police and Ealing Council prevented Kowalski from speaking at a Polish restaurant in Ealing, west London on 18 October 2017.²²⁸

Rafal Pankowski, an academic from the anti-racism charity 'Never Again', told the *BBC* that the UK far-right is trying to recruit Poles domestically following a perceived rise in far-right activity in Poland.²²⁹ Therefore, it is no accident that Britain First has tried and failed to bring over the likes of Jacek Międlar and Piotr Rybak to speak at rallies, given that Poles form the largest migrant community in Britain.²³⁰ One such example is Marian Lukasik, 61, a prominent Britain First supporter, who called for German Chancellor Angela Merkel to be 'shot to pieces' for letting Iraqi and Syrian refugees into Germany.²³¹ A YouTube video uploaded by Britain First deputy leader Jayda Fransen features Lukasik, who warns viewers about 'Islamisation' and the 'ritual rape' of white girls.²³²

The self-styled reporter **Weronika Kania**, who has contributed one hundred posts to the Polish-language anti-Islamisation website *NDIE*, was active in interviewing members of Britain First before her videos disappeared from YouTube. She spoke at a Britain First rally on 28 July 2017.²³³ On Facebook, she briefly updated her cover photo in praise of Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán in 2015. Recent Facebook posts have promoted Tommy Robinson's controversial new book and linked to a YouTube concerning the paedophilia and Islam.²³⁴ She has also interviewed Jayda Fransen, the deputy leader of Britain First.²³⁵

²²⁶ Pikió, Wiadomości. "Marian Kowalski z kolegami spalili flagę? LGBT (video)." Pikió.pl. Last modified July 9, 2015. <http://pikió.pl/marian-kowalski-z-kolegami-spalili-flage-lgbt-video/>.

²²⁷ <https://twitter.com/kowalskimarian/status/902176035105538048>

²²⁸ "Ealing Police Prevent 'Right Wing' Polish Speaker Addressing Audience." Ealing's Local Web Site. Accessed November 17, 2017. <http://www.ealingtoday.co.uk/default.asp?section=info&page=eakowalski001.htm>.

²²⁹ "The Anti-immigration Party Trying to Recruit Immigrants." BBC News. Last modified July 11, 2017. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-40509632>.

²³⁰ "Poland Most Common Non-UK Birth Country." BBC News. Last modified August 25, 2016. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-37183733>.

²³¹ Syal, Rajeev. "Britain First Supporter Calls for Merkel to Be Shot for Refugee Policy." The Guardian. Last modified July 6, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/06/britain-first-supporter-calls-for-merkel-to-be-shot-for-refugee-policy>.

²³² "Polish Patriot Backs Britain First to Take on Radical Islam!" YouTube. June 3, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmPBDmdv68w>.

²³³ Britain First's Facebook page. Accessed 23 November 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialBritainFirst/videos/1410555382423052/>.

²³⁴ Weronika M. Kania's Facebook page. Accessed 23 November 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/wmkania/posts/1911446072514023>.

²³⁵ "Weronika M. Kania Interviews Jayda Fransen at Britain First Birmingham Protest." YouTube. June 30, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C23w2DqDRAA>

Piotr Szlachtowicz hosts the online radio show '*The Nowy Polski Show*'. It sponsored an event in Slough which listed Jacek Międlar as a keynote speaker.²³⁶ The event celebrated the underground Polish army which fought in anti-communist resistance movements. Międlar, of course, was denied entry into the UK.²³⁷ Another event promoted by his radio show featured the Polish MEP Janusz Korwin-Mikke, who, in 2015, was suspended from the European Parliament for ten days after performing a Nazi salute.²³⁸ He has also claimed that Hitler 'probably' did not know about the Holocaust and the murder of millions of people was not his 'goal'.²³⁹ Korwin-Mikke used racial the epithet 'n-----' in 2014²⁴⁰ and was suspended this year after making sexist remarks in parliament.²⁴¹ An interview with Korwin-Mikke was uploaded by Mateusz Jaronski on 18 July 2017.²⁴² The Twitter feed of the *Nowy Polski Show*, has, on multiple occasions, posted tweets favourable of the leadership of the far-right political party Britain First.²⁴³²⁴⁴²⁴⁵

The British chapter of the openly neo-Nazi National Rebirth of Poland, *Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski* (NOP), made headlines in September 2016, after its members worked in conjunction with the neo-Nazi terrorist group National Action to feed homeless people in Glasgow and Yorkshire.²⁴⁶ The 'White Rescue: Charity Campaign for Europeans' campaign is said to have reached other cities like Exeter.²⁴⁷ The story emerged again in 2017, with the president of the Catholic mission where the soup kitchens were held, confirmed to the *Daily*

²³⁶ "CFCA - Jacek Międlar Returns to Poland After Denied Entry at London Airport." CFCA - The Coordination Forum for Countering Antisemitism. Accessed November 20, 2017. <http://antisemitism.org.il/article/112398/jacek-mi%C4%99dlar-returns-poland-after-denied-entry-london-airport>.

²³⁷ "Międlar Niewpuszczony Do Londynu. Wraca I RzUCA Oskarżenia." Newsweek.pl. Last modified February 25, 2017. <http://www.newsweek.pl/polska/spoleczenstwo/miedlar-zawrocony-z-londynu-oskarzany-artykuly,405903,1.html>.

²³⁸ "MEPs Sanctioned for Hitler Salutes." BBC News. Last modified October 27, 2015. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34651255>.

²³⁹ "Polish Ex-MP Says Hitler Didn't Know About Holocaust." The Times of Israel | News from Israel, the Middle East and the Jewish World. Accessed November 20, 2017. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/polish-ex-mp-says-hitler-didnt-know-about-holocaust/>.

²⁴⁰ "Polish MEP Says 'n-----' in EU Parliament." Telegraph.co.uk. Last modified July 17, 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/poland/10974032/Polish-MEP-says-n--in-EU-parliament.html>.

²⁴¹ Rankin, Jennifer. "Polish MEP Punished for Saying Women Are Less Intelligent Than Men." The Guardian. Last modified March 14, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/14/polish-mep-janusz-korwin-mikke-punished-saying-women-less-intelligent-men>.

²⁴² "Interview with Polish MEP - Janusz Korwin-Mikke - Southampton 15/07/2017." YouTube. July 18, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PM0yuTC4zg>.

²⁴³ Nowy Polski Show. Twitter Post. October 15, 2017, 3:53 PM. <https://twitter.com/NowyPolskiShow/status/919576870206746624>

²⁴⁴ Nowy Polski Show. Twitter Post. September 20, 2017, 10:37 PM. <https://twitter.com/NowyPolskiShow/status/910619057422045185>

²⁴⁵ Nowy Polski Show. Twitter Post. September 17, 2017, 3:25 PM <https://twitter.com/NowyPolskiShow/status/907611224283774976>

²⁴⁶ "Exclusive: Neo-Nazis Are Using a White-Only Homeless Charity to Spread Race Hate." Vice. Last modified September 15, 2016. https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/xdm3xd/neo-nazis-homeless-outreach-race-hate.

²⁴⁷ "Wielka Brytania: White Rescue for Europeans." Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski – NOP. Last modified September 18, 2016. <http://www.nop.org.pl/2016/09/18/wielka-brytania-white-rescue-for-europeans/>.

Record newspaper that it would ban the group.²⁴⁸ Members of the British chapter of the NOP also coordinated this campaign with the National Front in London in April 2017.²⁴⁹ The NOP has endured in Poland since its founding in 1981, entering mainstream politics in 2001, with little success. The NOP also broadly aligns with the positions of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn, according to their president, Adam Gmurczyk.²⁵⁰ Its UK chapter, has, according to anti-fascism group Hope not Hate, been active since 2010, attracting around 100 members.²⁵¹ A handful of their activists have held anti-abortion protests outside of medical centres in London and Doncaster, distributing propaganda printed in English.²⁵² A YouTube video of their anti-EU campaigning during the EU referendum includes an antisemitic banner which reads 'Stop Jewish Crimes'.²⁵³ The NOP may have benefited financially from programmatic advertising on YouTube, an investigation in *The Times* revealed.²⁵⁴ Polish neo-Nazis, linked to the NOP, from Emigrants United London (*Zjednoczeni Emigranci Londyn*) attacked individuals at a music festival in Tottenham, north London, in the summer of 2014.²⁵⁵ The resulting violence left an anti-fascist campaigner with stab wounds and a Jewish man having his kippah knocked from his head.²⁵⁶

Marian Kowalski took inspiration from Hungary to encourage the creation of various Idź Pod Prąd civic groups in Poland and abroad. Members are encouraged to socialise, to promote Idź Pod Prąd locally, and do group activities, political or otherwise.²⁵⁷ For example, the London group has repaired the gravestone of a Polish war veteran. Two admins for the Birmingham group have posed with air rifles on their social media pages. Many of the admins for the Yorkshire group seem to reside in Poland. Other groups boast very little online activity and little engagement from a small membership pool. While Idź Pod Prąd boasts of over twenty groups in the UK alone, this figure must also attract scrutiny.

²⁴⁸ Stewart, Stephen. "Homeless charity bans donations from Polish neo-Nazi thugs exploiting rough sleepers." Daily Record. Accessed November 27, 2017. <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/homeless-charity-bans-donations-polish-10805924>.

²⁴⁹ "White Rescue ? Charity Campaign for Europeans." National Front. Last modified April 29, 2017. <http://www.nationalfront.info/2017/04/29/white-rescue-charity-campaign-europeans/>.

²⁵⁰ "Adam Gmurczyk: A New Europe." National Rebirth Of Poland. Last modified October 18, 2016. <http://en.nop.org.pl/2016/10/18/adam-gmurczyk-a-new-europe/>.

²⁵¹ "New Blood – HOPE Not Hate." HOPE Not Hate. Accessed November 27, 2017. <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/research/investigations/new-blood/>.

²⁵² "Wielka Brytania: NOP Przeciwno Aborcji." Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski – NOP. Last modified July 15, 2017. <http://www.nop.org.pl/2017/07/15/wielka-brytania-nop-przeciwko-aborcji/>.

²⁵³ "Europe of Free Nations - Against EU." *YouTube*. June 20, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BoGTsTC-6g>.

²⁵⁴ Alexi Mostrous, Head of Investigations. "YouTube Hate Preachers Share Screens with Household Names." *The Times & The Sunday Times*. Last modified March 17, 2017. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/youtube-hate-preachers-share-screens-with-household-names-kdmpmkjk>.

²⁵⁵ "Man Stabbed During Violence As 'Polish Neo-Nazis' Storm Tottenham." *Evening Standard*. Last modified June 23, 2014. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/man-stabbed-during-violence-as-polish-neo-nazis-storm-tottenham-music-festival-9556346.html>.

²⁵⁶ Townsend, Mark. "Foreign-born Fascists 'helping to Radicalise UK Far-right Movement'." *The Guardian*. Last modified May 7, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/06/foreign-born-fascists-radicalise-uk-far-right-movement>.

²⁵⁷ "Kluby." Idź Pod Prąd. Accessed November 27, 2017. <https://idzpodprad.pl/kluby/>.

Conclusion

We should stress, however, that many of the UK-based activists mentioned in this paper, their reach, is, at best, minimal in Polish communities. A deeper concern is the role of the far-right in Britain and Poland which has sought to sow division with its efforts to bring over extremist speakers to the UK, and in some examples, speakers from the UK have attended events in Poland. By drawing on discourses that are more mainstream presents a challenge beyond the solutions proposed in this paper. Rather, this paper seeks to encourage dialogue and promote counter-narratives about more painful aspects of Polish history, and the positive interactions between Catholics and Muslims in the country. Interfaith dialogue among Poles who are Jewish, Muslim, and Catholic will help broaden the discussion about such issues. Faith Matter can help facilitate such dialogue through community and interfaith events and the use of social media. Future research will expand on some of the issues raised, conscious of how quickly politics changes, and in response to the needs of the Poles who seek to challenge the perceived growth of far-right in their communities. Faith Matters is indebted to these voices, not just for their translation of materials but in helping to prevent Marian Kowalski from speaking in London. The long-term plan will include community engagement events and training for interested community members around social media skills and how to facilitate conflict resolution.



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