The Wretched Heritage of Centuries
Romuald Jakub Weksler-Waszkinel

‘As the second millennium of Christianity approaches its end, it is proper for the Church to accept more consciously the burden of its sons’ transgression, and remember all those situations in the past when they departed from the spirit of Christ and His Gospel, and instead of giving the testimony of life inspired by the values of faith, they showed the world examples of thinking and acting that were indeed the source of the anti-testimony and abomination.’

John Paul II, Tertio Millennio Adveniente, n. 33.

Among first gifts man receives from God are his parents. God commands us to respect this gift: ‘Honour thy father and thy mother’ (Exodus 20:12) is among the commandments in the Decalogue. Love of the fatherland is also contained in this commandment—that is, the fatherland in the sense of one’s home. In Russian we say rodina, and Poles hear in it the Polish word rodzina: family, relatives, everyone close to us. Das Heim in German means house and home, thus die Heimat—homeland, place of birth. The French la patrie is from the Latin patria meaning pays du père or the country of our father. In English we say ‘homeland’, the land where my home is.

As for me, I was (I am) especially ‘blessed.’ The cruel destiny of war gave me, in a sense, two fathers and two mothers. I was born into a Jewish family in 1943. My parents and my brother and all my close relatives were murdered. I am alive. My birth mother managed to place me with a Polish family that not only accepted a Jewish baby, but provided that baby with everything that a child can hope for from loving parents. Therefore I
can confess in the utmost truthfulness that I carry the love of all my parents, both the Jewish and the Polish ones.\(^1\) I love my two mothers, Batia-Emilia, and my two fathers, Jakub-Piotr. I believe that before God these two families, the Wekslers and the Waszkinels, are alike, or at least as close to each other as they are in me. I wish it were like this not only before God in heaven, but also here on earth, especially in Poland, my earthly fatherland.

Unfortunately, it is not. Sad proof of this is provided, among other places, in the responses to the survey ‘Jews–Poles: A Difficult Identity,’ published in March 1996. It includes 11 interviews with Jews born in Poland between 1924 and 1953.\(^2\) Among them there are people who profess the faith of Jesus (Judaism), and people who believe in the divinity of Jesus (Christians); there are also agnostics and atheists. All of them were born in Poland, and all, to a greater or lesser extent, bear the stamp of the last war. Some of them presently live outside of Poland. The common denominator for all is that Poland is their homeland. It is something dear to them, and most of them love it deeply. But another common denominator for all of the participants in the survey is the antisemitism that they experience as rejection, as antipathy, disinclination, or even hostility towards them. Here are some of the responses.

Perhaps the most touching is from Janina Bauman, who now lives in England:

Antisemitism exists in Poland, we can openly admit it between ourselves…it is not a specifically Polish phenomenon. It does exist…in England as well…The English do not like the Irish, the Scottish, the Pakistanis, any foreigners. Why should they like the Jews? But I do not care. With Poland, it is a different thing. There, it hurts me, it deeply wounds me. And that is why I cannot return there. I would have nowhere to escape to if I ever heard that I am unwanted and alien in my home country. And I couldn’t go on with normal life after that. (p. 7)

Konstanty Gebert, a well known journalist who wrote as ‘Dawid Warszawski’ for the anti-Communist underground, was born after the war (1953) and lives in Poland. He wrote:
Poland is our homeland…. In Poland, in my home, I am the host…. And I only lose this pleasant feeling when…it comes out that the non-Jewish Poles react to instances of antisemitism differently than I do. Even if they sympathize with my outrage, in general they don’t feel threatened by this antisemitism…. Of course, Christianity remains for me an outside reality, though familiar. Sometimes hostile, since there is a form of it that excludes me from Polishness. It wants to see in a Polish Jew only a Jew living in Poland, at the most. Or preferably…a Jew living elsewhere.(pp. 8–9)

Ryszard Horowitz was born in Kraków in 1939. He is the youngest of the concentration camp inmates saved by Schindler. In Kraków he finished a fine arts high school, and then graduated from the Academy of Arts. Since 1959 he has lived in the USA. He writes: ‘We well remember those slogans full of the stereotypes and hatred towards Jews so deeply rooted in the mentality of many Poles even today.’(p. 20)

Janina Katz, born in 1939, has this to say: ‘I am a Polish Jew who has lived in Denmark for 27 years…. Antisemitism is a disease without a cure. And perhaps we shouldn’t seek a cure. Unfortunately, this disease is contagious. What can we do? It’s hard to say. But in the meantime, we shouldn’t hide.’(p. 22, 26)

One more example: Stanisław Krajewski, who was born in 1950 in Warsaw and lives there still, is the co-chairman of the Polish Council of Christians and the Jews. In the survey, he said:

I am a Pole, and at the same time I am a Jew…. We are fully Jews and fully Poles. Our fate is a part of the fate of Poland…. That’s fine, but how are we different from other Poles?…. All of us are somehow marked by the destruction of the war. We know we were condemned to death. This distinguishes us from our non-Jewish peers. So few among them understand it—the majority repeats that everybody suffered equally. We have not only lost members of our families, which
is in Poland very common. In most cases we have almost no families at all…. It is this vacuum that makes us visible…. Generally speaking, we have a sense of connection with Jewish destiny and with other Jews, even if they are culturally distant…. Alas, the most general common ground is negative: it is the sense of being threatened by antisemitism.(p.29)

Why do all of the respondents feel their closeness to Poland so strongly? I think that the answer to this question is in history. Yes, in Polish history. ‘During the centuries of its millennium-long history’, wrote John Paul II, ‘Poland was a country of many nations and many Christian—but not only Christian—creeds. This tradition meant, and still means, that a characteristic of the Polish mentality is tolerance, openness towards people who think differently, or speak in different tongues, or pray differently, or perform the same mysteries of their faith differently.’

The present debate about Poland (and it must be stated clearly that such a debate is currently taking place) is also a debate about the interpretation of its history. Almost half a century of communist rule in Poland has accustomed us, or at least tried to accustom us, to the claim that Poland is a uni-national country. Yet this claim is less than half a century old; moreover, it is, in my opinion, ‘woven’ from many different ideologies rather than based on facts. Poland was, and still is—although to a much lesser extent than before—a common home for many nations and religions. Poland was also a homeland to its Jews. Especially in the context of Poland’s history, the attachment of the Polish Jew to this country appears to be fully understandable, almost natural.

Then, why antisemitism? First and foremost, we should remember that antisemitism is not a uniquely Polish phenomenon. On the other hand, the uniqueness of Polish antisemitism must be traced in Polish history, and especially in the history of last two centuries.

Finally, we come to the question which is the most important, at least to me. Is it true, as one of the respondents to the poll said, that antisemitism is a disease without a cure?
The same person stated furthermore that it is a contagious disease, for which we shouldn’t seek a treatment. In this matter, my opinion is different. I agree that it is a disease, but I believe that a medicine for it already exists. What’s more, the beneficial results of this medicine can already be seen.

I will touch only briefly on each of the three topics raised above; the first two are for the most part well known. Even so, it may be worthwhile to revisit them in order to better understand the significance of what I call the medicine against antisemitism.

I. The Jewish presence in Polish land is almost as old as the Polish state. The oldest Jewish settlements were established in Silesia and Little Poland (Małopolska) on the trans-European route between Spain and Khazaria. The sources first mention the Jewish settlement in Przemyśl, at that time an important centre on the border of Little Poland and Ruthenia. It already existed around the year 1018 or 1030. At the end of the 11th century, Jewish merchants were already reaching Płock, then ruled by Władysław Herman.

In medieval Europe, the Jews were direct subjects of the ruler as servi camerae (servants of the treasury). Referring to the rule of Mieszko the Elder, Wincenty Kadłubek wrote in his Chronicle: ‘Students wounded a Jew by accident, and the judges punished them with the same fine [70 grzywnas] as that for sacrilege.’

With the Statute of Kalisz in 1264, the Prince of Kalisz, Bolesław the Pious, granted the Jews dwelling in his principality a ‘privilege’. In 1334, after the unification of Poland, Kazimierz the Great extended this privilege to the Jews in the whole country. Confirmed and appended by later rulers, it became the foundation of the legal status of Jewish population until the end of the 17th century.

I would like to draw particular attention to the Statute of Kalisz as a document granting the Jewish community very broad rights. First of all, it subjected the Jews to the authority of the prince (in practice represented by a voivode) and secured for them his protection. It guaranteed the Jews’ freedom to create their own religious communities: conflicts between Jews were resolved by the kehillah courts, with the right of appeal to the
prince. Jewish merchants could trade on an equal footing with Christian merchants. The punishment for killing a Jew was death and the seizure of all property. The punishment for vandalizing a prayer house or a cemetery was also harsh. The privilege obligated Christians to come to the aid of Jews who were being assaulted. In one of the Statute’s paragraphs, the prince, referring to a papal bull of Pope Innocent IV, forbade Christians to accuse Jews of using human blood for ritual purposes. When we remember that the Kielce pogrom of July 1946, which shocked world opinion, was prompted by a rumour about an alleged ritual murder, we can rightfully claim that ignorance dies slowly.

According to Fijalkowski, there are many indications that a large proportion of the Jews living in Poland knew the local language fluently. Only in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with the influx of a large number of Jewish refugees from German countries, did the Polish Jewry become linguistically unified, with Yiddish becoming dominant.

From the sixteenth until the eighteenth century, the Polish Republic was truly a mosaic of cultures and religions. The end of the sixteenth century was the period of the greatest influence of Protestantism. Telling evidence of this is the fact that in 1572, of 73 senators, 36 were Protestants, and a few years earlier, Protestant senators had constituted a majority. Most of the Protestants were Lutherans and Calvinists, but there were also Arians. Also residing in the Republic were Uniates (after the Union of Brest in 1596), Orthodox Christians, Ruthenian Old Believers, and members of the Armenian Church. All of these made up the family of Christians.

The non-Christians were also numerous, and the majority among them were Jews. The sixteenth century, when Poland was considered the Paradisus Judeorum, was a golden age in the history of the Polish Jews. In the Jewish writings of that period we find the beautiful interpretation of Poland as Polin, meaning 'rest here,' or Polonia, 'here God dwells.' The regional Jewish parliaments, established in the sixteenth century and patterned after similar Polish institutions, were a form of autonomous Jewish organization specific to
Poland; they were followed, from 1580, by the general Jewish parliament, the *Va’ad Arba Aratzot*.

By the sixteenth century, Jewish elementary education had developed in the form of *hadarim*. Boys of 4–5 years of age learned to read Hebrew texts and to translate them into Yiddish, the vernacular, under the guidance of a *melamed* or teacher. After completing the *hadarim* some boys went on to study in yeshivot. In the seventeenth century Jewish diaspora, Polish Jews were looked upon as having extraordinary spiritual virtues, a combination of learning and piety. In Jewish communities all over Europe one could find highly respected rabbis educated in Polish yeshivot.

In the seventeenth century, and even in the eighteenth, the movement of Sabbatai Zvi grew in Poland. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Frankist movement arose. To the Frankists we trace the maternal ‘roots’ of one of Poland’s greatest poets, Adam Mickiewicz. Finally, in the eighteenth century, the Republic was the cradle of hasidism.

It is also worth mentioning that the Karaites, descendants of the Khazars from the Volga river region who professed a particular form of Judaism, also found their home—that is, their homeland—in the Republic, as did the Muslim Tartars. Thus, it is clear that Poland was a home—a homeland—to many nations and religions, not only Christian. The Jews did not merely settle there temporarily, on their way to some other destination.

With the partitions of Poland, everything started to deteriorate, including Polish-Jewish relations. The Spring of Nations in the nineteenth century brought especially radical changes. The Jews reacted in a number of different ways. Jews were present in Dabrowski’s Legions, a presence memorialised in literature by the character of Jankiel in Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz*. Jews participated in the November and January Insurrections and took part in the ‘organic work’ of developing Polish culture. The Orgelbrands, the Glucksbergs, the Kronenbergs, the Natansons, the Toeplitzes, the Wawelbergs, and many others make up only a partial list of the families that flourished in Poland.
The nineteenth century was also marked by the participation of a relatively small but very prominent layer of secularised Jewish youth in radical and revolutionary movements. These movements seemed to threaten the existing order, and in a way they prepared the ground for the idea of ‘Jewish communists’. The overrepresentation of Jewish youth in the communist movement in the twentieth century reinforced the stereotype of ‘Jew-communist’ and became the perfect ground for antisemitic propaganda and actions. This stereotype was employed by the National Democracy movement, and is still alive today.

In 1918, when Poland was restored to the map of Europe, it was shaped by two main currents: that of Pi_sudski’s camp and that of Dmowski’s National Democracy. According to many historians, Pi_sudski’s camp was the more patriotic and specifically Polish, clearly drawing from the multi-national and multi-religious tradition of Poland. Dmowski, on the other hand, drew from the 19th century nationalisms that sought their ally in Catholicism.

Polish-Jewish relations were difficult in the two interwar decades, and it would be naive to expect that they should have been otherwise during the years of the Nazi occupation. The dark years of enslavement revealed some beautiful and even heroic attitudes, but they also brought to the surface ordinary human wickedness and baseness. People reacted to the situation in many different ways. And that’s why I consider it inappropriate to use generalities in reference either to the Polish side or to the Jewish side. Statements to the effect that all Poles (or all Jews) behaved badly, or behaved as heroes, are untrue. Poles and Jews behaved in many different ways—very many. I owe my life to the heroic attitude of a Polish family that saved me with no consideration of possible reward. My brother Samuel Weksler is dead and could not have been saved even if my Jewish parents had paid for his rescue with everything they possessed. Thus, there were heroic attitudes and there were vicious ones; there was the normal human fear that sometimes prevented any kind of action, and there was ordinary human indifference; and there were many other attitudes and situations.
II. Where does antisemitism come from? Is it fair to trace the roots of antisemitism to Christianity? No doubt, those who maintain that the hostility towards Jews is older than Christianity are correct. However, it is a fact that it was within Christianity, not later than in the fourth century CE, that the ideology of anti-Judaism was born.\textsuperscript{7} This ideology was the source, or if you will, the root of antisemitism.\textsuperscript{8} Until the 2nd Vatican Council, the Catholic Church taught that it was the New Israel, a new ‘chosen people’ replacing the people of the Old Testament. Judaism was to disappear. The editors of the Polish version of the Millenium Bible, published after the Council, still saw in the fruitless fig tree condemned by Christ to wither a symbol of ‘fruitless Israel.’\textsuperscript{9}

While remembering the Statute of Kalisz, we also need to keep in mind the synod of the Gniezno archdiocese that took place in Breslau in 1267 and was headed by Cardinal Gwido. The resolution of this synod ordered the creation of a separate quarter for the Jewish population. In addition, the Jews were ordered to wear a pointed cap as a badge of shame and were forbidden to enter public places frequented by Christians, hold office, or have Christian servants. The basis for these rules was anti-Judaism.

We should note, however, that in Poland, this and similar resolutions were not strictly enforced. Poland’s unique climate of tolerance was dictated by its geographical location. Professor Janusz Tazbir writes:

If we look at the map of medieval Europe, we notice that the border dividing the two worlds, the pagan and the Christian, ran through two countries, namely Spain and Poland. On the Iberian Peninsula, Catholicism served the cause of unifying the country by liberating it from the hands of the Muslim Moors, whereas the Teutonic Order which under the auspices of the Papacy and the German Empire was active on our territory constituted a mortal threat to the Polish state. In her struggle against the Knights, Poland was helped by Lithuania, which for some time remained pagan, and by Tartar reinforcements. No wonder that during the period of the fiercest struggle against the Order (the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), Polish
doctrine regarding believers in other religions was formed. This doctrine condemned proselytising by force, and stressed that the ‘infidels’ were our fellow men, to whom we were bound by the principles expressed in the Gospel.¹⁰

One of the creators of the doctrine, Pawel Wódkowic, emphasized that the Jews had a special place among the ‘infidels’ because of the Gospel. He wrote: ‘We must be especially tolerant towards the Jews because through their books we prove our truth and our faith’.¹¹ From the time of the Council of Konstanz in 1415, the Polish doctrine was widely known in Europe.

Polish tolerance toward members of other faiths was in a way the result of Poland’s place in Europe. In the changed political situation in the nineteenth century, the tradition of tolerance was somehow forgotten—which is perhaps understandable. Nevertheless, it is regrettable that so little effort was put in to reviving this memory so as to more fully restore the life of the Republic in the interwar years. The various nationalistic parties, which most often used religion (Catholicism) in a purely instrumental way, played a particular role in fuelling antisemitic propaganda. Experience teaches us that the combination of nationalism and religion is always very dangerous, no matter whether it is of the Arab, Jewish, or Polish variety.¹²

III. Given this state of affairs, is the disease of antisemitism really incurable? I believe that there is a cure, and that it really works.

As I said, religious hatred—anti-Judaism—is the source of antisemitism. Anti-Judaism was the virus fuelling the disease of antisemitism. How dangerous this disease can be, the surviving victims of the Holocaust can testify. But can we really link anti-Judaism with antisemitism as cause and effect? I believe we can. Without anti-Judaism, antisemitism would not be so efficient, would not mobilize so large a mass of people in hatred of the Jews, and would not yield the ‘fruit’ of the Holocaust. Protest against Nazism, against the
‘Final Solution’ of the Jewish question, was weak because it was disarmed by anti-Judaism, and so it did not strike at the source of the infection.

A good example of this problem is the famous and widely known leaflet, published by the underground Catholic social-educational organization ‘The Front for the Resurrection of Poland’ shortly after the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto had begun in August 1942. Its author was the prominent Catholic writer Zofia Kossak-Szczucka.

I want to stress that the text of this leaflet is, and it will remain, a great and important testimony to Poland’s efforts to aid the Jews, but at the same time, a sad and even depressing one. Here is the disturbing passage: ‘That is why we, Polish Catholics, are speaking out. Our feelings towards the Jews have not changed. We still consider them to be the political, economic, and ideological enemies of Poland. What is more, we are aware that they hold us responsible for their misfortune. Why, and on what ground—that is the mystery of the Jewish soul, but it is a fact that is being confirmed again and again.’

This passage uses the typically Endek [National-Democratic] phrase: ‘the mystery of Jewish soul;’ but more important is the fact that while the leaflet calls for help, those who were to benefit from this help were labelled ‘enemies’ beyond correction. I do not believe that such a plea could have moved those who until then had been indifferent. Rather, it excused their indifference. In the leaflet, the Jews are called, among other things, ideological enemies. I take this to mean religious enemies. Thus, by treating a Jew as unchangeable ideological enemy, a nationalist—a Polish Catholic—not only could feel he was a Polish patriot, but also, as he thought, a defender of the Catholic faith. Where did such an assumption come from?

The anti-Judaism present in the Church doctrine justified antisemitic behaviour, and even added vigour it. Over the centuries, this anti-Judaism acted as a sort of detonator in the ticking bomb of antisemitism. There is an extensive literature on this subject. Without anti-Judaism, the explosive power of the Nazi regime would not have been so great or so deadly. Of course, Hitlerite Fascism was deeply anti-Christian, and had nothing to do with
the spirit of the Gospel. We cannot, however, fail to notice that the Nazi party (NSDAP)
saw Christianity as its ally.\textsuperscript{15} It was of course a perfidious game on the part of the Nazis.
The extensive murder of priests by the Nazis in Poland (and not only in Poland) is well
documented. To tell the whole truth, however, we must say that it was because of the clear
anti-Judaism of the Church that such a game was possible.\textsuperscript{16}

At the 2nd Vatican Council, the Catholic Church underwent a radical revision in its
view of this matter. It renounced that which had raised its head in the 4th century, and which
was an outright error. The Church was conceived, so to speak, in the womb of Judaism.
Thus ‘The Declaration of the Council on Its Attitude Towards Non-Christian Religions’,
with its opening words, ‘Nostra aetate,’ directs particular attention to the common heritage
uniting the Christians and the Jews. It is of course the heritage of Abraham and his
progeny. It is, simply speaking, the heritage of Judaism: ‘Since, as we read in the
declaration, the spiritual heritage that is common to the Christians and the Jews is so great,
this Holy Council desires to revive and advise mutual recognition and respect, which can be
achieved especially through biblical and theological studies and brotherly
discussions.’ (n.4). It means, to put it simply, that instead of anti-Judaism, the Church points
to the need to show respect for Judaism. The Pope, during his memorable visit to the
Greater Synagogue in Rome on April 13, 1986, said: ‘The Jewish religion is for our
religion not an outside reality. It is something internal. The attitude towards it is different
from attitudes towards other religions. You are our beloved brothers, and one may say, our
older brothers.’

In a word, the teaching of the 2nd Vatican Council, and later documents of the Holy
See, the most recent Catechism of Catholic Church, a great number of the speeches by John
Paul I, and his respectful and friendly attitude towards the Jews\textsuperscript{17}, all demonstrate the new
attitude of the Church in renouncing anti-Judaism. This, I believe, is the medicine against
antisemitism.
Can we say anything about the effectiveness of this ‘medicine’? I think we can, although it would be naive to expect immediate, miraculous changes in people’s attitudes in this respect. Anti-Judaism was part of the Church’s doctrine for more than 15 centuries, while since the end of the 2nd Vatican Council only a little more than 30 years have passed.

Thus, we can still find clearly antisemitic texts whose authors act as they are defending Catholicism and Poland\(^\text{18}\). In fact, they harm Poland and they bring no pride to Catholicism. They merely defend their own old habits. No mention can be found in these texts of the last Council’s teachings, or of the Pope’s teachings. Charles Péguy was right when he said that ‘habit is worse than sin.’

The attitude of the Church—the Church that is led by John Paul II—is unambiguous in this matter: ‘antisemitism is a great sin against humanity’\(^\text{19}\). This is what Polish Bishops said in their Pastoral Letter to the faithful on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the declaration of the Council, *Nostra aetate*: ‘We express… our honest regret for all instances of antisemitism that ever or by anyone have occurred on Polish soil. We do this in the deep conviction that any act of antisemitism contradicts the spirit of the Gospel.’\(^\text{20}\)

Among the antisemitic texts drawing on the tradition of Christian antisemitism whose authors do not want to accept the change in the Church’s attitude are those originating from circles close to the Union of Grunwald. Let us call it a nationalistic, post-communist antisemitism. The authors of these texts are clearly anxious because of the change in the Church’s attitude towards the Jews. For example, in the editorial introduction to Stanislaw Wysocki’s book *Żydzi w dziejach Polski*, Boguslaw Rybicki writes: ‘For two thousand years the Catholic Church warned against the Jews, and the Jews did not regard Christ as a Jew. What has changed, all of a sudden???’ \(^\text{21}\)

Should the author of this text take in his hand and skim through the Holy Scripture of the New Testament, he would find the *Letter to the Hebrews*. And should he want to read the Gospels and the letters of St. Paul—they are worthy of reading—he might change his
opinion both about the Catholic Church and the Jews. The question, put in capitals and with three question marks, indicates that the change in the Church’s attitude towards the Jews is indeed threatening to antisemites.

In fact, something has changed! The ‘detonator’ called anti-Judaism was removed, was disarmed and thrown away. For all of us to whom Poland is home, this should be an obligation. Many nations and many religions are entwined in the history of Poland. Still, it is beyond doubt that Catholic Church has been Poland’s main teacher and educator. Nationalism is alien to Polish culture. If we rid all things that are in some way the heritage of Christianity of anti-Judaism, a bad heritage, then Polish antisemitism would be, I hope, greatly hampered. I wish for the day when it can no longer be found in my homeland.

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2 ‘Jews–Poles: A Difficult Identity’, Znak 490 (March 1996). In fact, there are 10 responses to the poll and an interview with Marek Edelman. Some of the responses do not include the respondent’s date of birth.

3 Jan Pawel II (John Paul II), Przekroczyć próg nadziei (Lublin, 1994), 116.


5 Ibid., 16.

6 My Polish parents were posthumously awarded the medal ‘Righteous among Nations.’ On August 21, 1995 I unveiled the plaque with their names at the wall of honor in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.
Aleksander Wat’s remarks seem apt: ‘The Jews, because of their separatness, because of their mysterious fate and obstinacy—in spite of massacres—and their ancient customs and prejudices, everywhere in the Diaspora excited anti-Jewish prejudices. Plutarch explained it in the most logical way in his moral writings, but it was the Church that provided a philosophy and a system of justification for this hostility, refined it and organized it…. And it lasted for centuries: a million priests from their pulpits and millions of catechists taught generation after generation about the vicious Jews, the nation of genocide perpetrators.’

Aleksander Wat, Moj wiek, Pamiętnik mówiony, (Warsaw, 1990), vol. II 320–1.


Editors’ note to Mt. 21: 18–22. ‘Why should anybody need a whithered tree....?’


The full text, together with an interesting commentary, is published in Jan Błoński, Biedni Polacy patrzą na getto (Kraków, 1994), 38f. For the full English text of Szczucka’s appeal, see Aleksander Smolar, ‘Jews as a Polish Problem,’ Daedalus, Spring 1987, 36.

I direct the reader to just one work, in my opinion fundamental: F. Lvovsky, L’antisémïtisme chrétien (Paris, 1970).

In the program of the NSDAP we read: ‘The Party as such endorses Christianity but it ties itself with no religion in regard of faith.’ See: Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf (p. 284 in the Polish edition).

See for example: H. Mueller, Katolisch Kirche und Nationalsozialismus (Munich, 1960), 118.

See for example the Introduction, full of piety, almost religious, by J. Giertych to the antisemitic book by Zygmunt Konieczny, Cywilizacja Żydowska (Komorow, 1997), 5–11.

See John Paul II, To Cross the Threshold of Hope, 86.

For the full text of the Pastoral Letter of the Polish Episcopate of 30 November 1990, see Kościół Katolicki o swoich korzeniach (Introduction, Bp. Stanislaw Gądecki) (Warsaw, 1995), 40–5.

Żydzi w dziejach Polski (Warsaw, 1995), 5.