

The Institute for Nationality Research (1921–1939) – A Think Tank for Minority Politics in Poland?

On the evening of May 16, 1928, more than a dozen members of the Polish parliament, an even larger number of scholars, and several journalists convened in the representative Hall of the Mazovian Dukes in Warsaw. The meeting had an informal character – it was announced as a social gathering – and no special topic or speaker was announced. Nevertheless, the meeting itself was quite special. The guests had been invited by the Institute for Nationality Research (*Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych*, IBSN), which organized such events in order to:

provide an opportunity for representatives of Polish society to come into contact with representatives of non-Polish societies in an informal atmosphere and to contribute in this way to the participants getting to know one another better.¹

At the time, the members of these supposedly different national societies had all lived for almost ten years in an independent Polish state. Yet – as the language of this quote indicates – for many of that time it seemed to be natural that each of the national groups formed its own society within the state, societies, therefore, that needed to be brought together.

Among the guests were representatives and MPs of Polish as well as German, Jewish, and Belarusian parties, journalists of the Ukrainian newspaper *Dilo* (»The Deed«), the Jewish daily *Nasz Przegląd* (»Our Review«), and many Polish, Jewish, Belarusian, and Ukrainian scholars. Other public figures were also present, such as Stanisław Bukowiecki,² chairman of the Polish General Public Prosecutor's

1 »[...] dać sposobność zetknięcia się na gruncie towarzyskim przedstawicielom społeczeństwa polskiego z przedstawicielami społeczeństw niepolskich i przyznać się w ten sposób do wzajemnego bliższego poznania się,« in: »Zebranie towarzyskie Instytutu,« in: *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 2, no. 2 (1928): 310.

2 Stanisław Bukowiecki (1867–1944), lawyer, publicist, minister of justice of the Polish Regency Council 1917–1918, organizer and chairman of the Polish Office of the Attorney General 1919–1939. *Encyklopedia Historii Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, s.v. »Stanisław Bukowiecki.«

office, historians Marceli Handelsman,³ Ignacy Schiper,⁴ and Majer Bałaban,⁵ linguists Roman Smal-Stocki⁶ and Ivan Ohienko,⁷ the rabbi of the Great Synagogue in Warsaw and director of the Institute for Judaic Studies (*Instytut Nauk Judaistycznych*), Mojżesz Schorr,⁸ as well as Stanisław Thugutt,⁹ former vice premier and director of the IBSN, and its secretary general, Stanisław Józef Paprocki,¹⁰ to mention only a few. As reported in a short note in *Sprawy*

3 Marceli Handelsman (1882–1945), one of the most influential and internationally recognized Polish historians of that time, professor of Warsaw University, worked several times as an advisor to the government in international negotiations. Originally from a Jewish family, he converted to Catholicism. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, s.v. »Marceli Handelsman.«

4 Ignacy Schiper (1884–1943), historian of Polish-Jewish economic and cultural history and Zionist politician. From 1922 to 1927 member of the Sejm, from its founding in 1927, lecturer at the Institute for Judaic Studies (*Instytut Nauk Judaistycznych* – INJ) in Warsaw. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., s.v. »Ignacy Schiper.«

5 Majer Bałaban (1877–1942), one of the most influential historians in Polish-Jewish history, active Zionist, 1920–1930 head of the *Tahkemoni* rabbinical Seminar in Warsaw, one of the founders and later director of the INJ, first professor for Jewish History at a Polish University. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., s.v. »Meir Balaban.«

6 Roman Smal-Stocki (1893–1969) born in Chernivtsi, scholar, politician and diplomat, after WWI representative of the Western Ukrainian National Republic (1918–1919) and later special envoy of the Ukrainian National Republic (1921–1923) to Berlin, 1923–1924 professor of Slavic linguistics in Prague, 1925 lecturer, later professor at Warsaw University, secretary of the Ukraiński Instytut Naukowy in Warsaw (1930–1939). *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, s.v. »Roman Smal-Stotsky.«

7 Ivan Ohienko (1882–1972), in Polish also Jan Ogijenko, monastic name Ilarion, scholar, politician, Orthodox metropolitan, co-organizer and first rector of the Kamianets-Podilskyi University in 1918, minister of education and then minister of religious affairs 1919–1924 (from 1920 in exile) of the Ukrainian National Republic, from 1926–1932 professor of Church Slavonic at Warsaw University. *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, s.v. »Ivan Ohienko.«

8 Mojżesz Schorr (1874–1941), historian, orientalist and rabbi, professor for Semitic languages and history of the ancient Orient first at Lviv and later at Warsaw University, from 1923 rabbi at Warsaw's Great Synagogue, founder and first director of the Institute for Judaic Studies, member of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences, from 1935 to 1938 member of the Polish Senate. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., s.v. »Mojżesz Schorr.«

9 Stanisław August Thugutt (1873–1941), politician and leader of the Polish cooperative movement, 1918–1919 minister of interior, 1922–1927 member of the Sejm, and 1924–1925 vice premier and minister without portfolio in the government of Władysław Grabski. *Kto był kim w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, s.v. »Stanisław August Thugutt.«

10 Stanisław Józef Paprocki (1895–1976), lawyer, political and social activist, follower of Józef Piłsudski, initiated the founding of the Union for the Reform

Narodowościowe (»Nationality Affairs«), the institute's journal, the meeting lasted until midnight due to the »animated conversations«.¹¹

The meeting took place a few months after the IBSN – originally founded as a private initiative in 1921 – had been thoroughly restructured, professionalized, and integrated into a network of governmental and semi-governmental institutions dealing with minority questions. The aim of the event was to present the institute as an institution that not only researched minority issues but which was also able to function as an intermediary between the minorities' representatives, on the one hand, and the government and state administration, on the other. In this manner, the IBSN showed that it was able to create a space where the political and social elites of different national groups could come together with Polish politicians and state administrators on an informal basis. This made it possible to work toward an atmosphere of trust for possible future cooperation. And trust was an important factor in the political system of Piłsudski's Poland, where the achievement of a balance of interests through parliamentary struggle was not considered appropriate as a means of serving the »interests of the state«. Men of trust (*mężowie zaufania*) in turn had considerable influence on governmental decision making.¹²

The issue of national minorities and their integration into the Polish state, which emerged after World War I, was one of the most difficult political questions of the time. In fact, it remained unresolved throughout the twenty years of the Second Polish Republic's existence. When the state was invaded by German and Soviet troops in September 1939, there was no solution in sight that would have satisfied all sides. Nevertheless, despite the relatively short time and the great economic and political problems the new independent state had to face, various ideas and concepts for a solution were developed, proposed, and discussed, with some of them being enacted. The Institute for Nationality Research was an important actor in this field and set the stage for many such attempts.

In this article I will focus on a group of people – mainly scholars, politicians, and officers of the higher ministerial administration – who are not all widely known, but were well networked and, as experts¹³ on minority issues, had

of the Republic (*Związek Naprawy Rzeczypospolitej* – ZNR) in 1926 and was its secretary general from 1926–1929, from January 1926 secretary of the IBSN, which he directed from April 1927 to September 1939 as secretary general. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, s. v. »Stanisław Józef Paprocki.«

11 »Zebrańie towarzyskie Instytutu,« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 2, no. 2 (1928): 310.

12 Andrzej Chojnowski, *Piłsudczycy u władzy: Dzieje Bezpartyjnego Bloku Współpracy z Rządem* (Wrocław et al.: Ossolineum, 1986), 33–36.

13 On the role of experts and their influence on politics in Poland and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe of that period, see Martin Kohlrausch,

considerable influence on the Polish minority politics of the time. In this context, I present the IBSN as an institution that would today be called a think tank¹⁴ for minority policy. In the first part of the article I will show how the IBSN emerged and how it developed as an institution for minority research and related policy advice in the years before and soon after the coup d'état of Józef Piłsudski in May 1926. In the second part, I will examine its function as an intermediary between the state and minorities by analyzing how the research, discussions, and gatherings organized by the IBSN influenced the development of laws concerning religious groups in Poland.

The legal status of the Orthodox Church and the Jewish community in Poland – the two largest non-Catholic religious communities – was widely unregulated due to the process of transformation after World War I.¹⁵ At the same time, the vast majority of those from different religious groups affected by the lack of regulations were considered to belong to a different nationality than the ethnic Poles,¹⁶ and thus the issue was one of the most important within the field of minority policy. During the law-making process the IBSN did not only provide its expertise to the lawmakers, but also offered Jewish and Ukrainian political groups a forum to articulate their expectations concerning this legis-

Katrin Steffen, and Stefan Wiederkehr, »Introduction,« in *Expert Cultures in Central Eastern Europe: The Internationalisation of Knowledge and the Transformation of Nation States after World War I*, eds. Martin Kohlrausch, Katrin Steffen, and Stefan Wiederkehr (fibre: Osnabrück, 2010), 9–30, here 9–25 (online in: <http://www.perspectivia.net>).

14 On the definition of think tanks, see Diane Stone, »Think Tanks and Policy Analysis,« in *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Methods, and Politics*, eds. Frank Fischer, Gerald J. Miller, and Mara S. Sidney (New York: Marcel Dekker Inc., 2006), 149–158. Similar institutions also existed in other fields, such as the Instytut Wschodni in Warsaw and the Instytut Naukowo-Badawczy Europy Wschodniej in Vilnius which worked in the field of Eastern policy and the Instytut Bałtycki in Toruń, which dealt with the development of the north-western parts of Poland.

15 The legal basis of the Orthodox church had been completely unclear until the Provisional Regulations on the Relationship of the Government to the Orthodox Church in Poland (*Tymczasowe przepisy o stosunku rządu do Kościoła prawosławnego w Polsce*) was issued on 30 January 1922 although, even afterwards, many questions – especially concerning the property of the church remained unsolved. Krzysztof Krasowski, *Związki wyznaniowe w II Rzeczypospolitej, studium historyczнопrawne* (Warszawa–Poznań: PWN, 1988), 128–158. The legal situation of the Jewish communities was even more complicated, as the different legal regulations of the former partition power remained at least partly in force, leading to the legal situation of the Jewish communities differing quite strongly between the former partitions of Poland. *Ibid.*, 179–190.

16 A small number of Jews and Orthodox Christians considered themselves to be Poles of Mosaic or Orthodox confession.

lation and to come into contact with Polish politicians and the country's ministerial bureaucracy. Through this constellation, I argue, the IBSN's work had a considerable impact on the political process of constructing and partly establishing a legal basis for the relations between the religious communities and the state.

The Emergence of the Institute for Nationality Research

In the first years after WWI the public debate over national minorities and their role in the Polish state was quite tense, especially after Poland was forced to sign the 1919 Minorities Treaty in order to receive international recognition as an independent state. This was, regardless of the treaty's content, perceived as a great injustice by all Polish political camps, as the regulations for minority protection were only imposed on certain countries and were not universally binding for all states. The debates on minority rights in the constitutional Sejm were also heated, especially between the right-wing National Democrats and the Jewish deputies.¹⁷ In this atmosphere, a circle of politicians and scholars, including people such as Szymon Askenazy,¹⁸ Stanisław Thugutt, Marcelli Handelsman, Tadeusz Hołówko,¹⁹ Stanisław Stempowski²⁰ and Leon Wasilewski,²¹ came

17 The 11 Jewish and 8 German MPs were the only representation of national minorities in the constitutional Sejm; Paweł Korzec, »Der Block der Nationalen Minderheiten im Parlamentarismus Polens des Jahres 1922,« *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung* 24, no. 2 (1975): 193–220, here 198.

18 Szymon Askenazy (1866–1935), Polish historian and diplomat, member of the Jewish Assimilationist Party, chair of modern history at Lviv University before WWI. During WWI in Switzerland, where he supported the struggle for Polish independence as editor of the *Moniteur Polonais*, 1920–1923 Polish representative at the League of Nations. *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, s.v. »Szymon Askenazy,« <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org> (accessed August 1, 2014).

19 Tadeusz Hołówko (1889–1931), politician and journalist, until 1926 member of the Polish Socialist Party, follower of Józef Piłsudski, vice president of the Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government (*Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem* – BBWR), from 1927–1930 director of the Eastern Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, murdered by Ukrainian nationalists in summer 1931 in Truskawec, Galicia. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, s.v. »Tadeusz Hołówko.«

20 Stanisław Stempowski (1870–1952), politician, social activist, journalist, and translator of several books into Polish, supporter of the Polish Socialist Party before WWI, 1920–1921 Minister of Agriculture and later Minister without Portfolio in several governments of the Ukrainian National Republic, 1924–1939 director of the Library of the Ministry of Agriculture. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, s.v. »Stanisław Stempowski.«

21 Leon Wasilewski (1870–1936), scholar, politician, and diplomat, 1918–1919 Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1920–1921 Polish ambassador to Estonia,

together, sharing the conviction that minority questions in Poland should be solved peacefully and in mutual agreement with the respective groups. In order to better realize this goal, they promoted the foundation of an institute for research on nationalities. In this context, minority issues could be researched and discussed on a scholarly basis outside the political arena. At a meeting on December 4, 1921, Marcelli Handelsman, who had proposed the formation of such an institute, stressed its necessity due to:

the short-lived tenure of our ministerial offices, the underdevelopment of views on ethnic minorities in society and political parties, the lack of knowledge about them from the point of view of Polish foreign interests and especially because of the ignorance towards these issues, even among Poland's most distinguished citizens.²²

While Handelsman's initiative for such an institution found support among the group, his original idea that the institute, in addition to its scholarly work, should develop political programs and support the government in policy-making, was rejected due to the political diversity of those attending the meeting. At another meeting later that month, the plans became more concrete: The institute was to mainly organize lectures and discussions on topics related to its activities, while the members of the institute were to form commissions on each national minority living in Poland. They were then to research the problems of the respective group and discuss them with its members.²³ However, over the first few years of its existence, the activities of the IBSN did not in fact extend beyond a number of lectures and the publication of one single pamphlet.²⁴ By 1924 the work of the institute had already come to a halt, mainly due to a lack of funds.²⁵

1921 delegate at the Treaty of Riga negotiations, member of the Polish Socialist Party, from 1924 head of the Institute of Modern Polish History, died in Warsaw 1936. *Kto był kim w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, s.v. »Leon Wasilewski.«

22 »krótkotrwałość istnienia naszych gabinetów ministerialnych, niewyrobienie poglądów na sprawę mniejszości narodowych wśród społeczeństwa i partii [sic] politycznych, nieinformowanie o nich z punktu widzenia interesów państwowych polskich zagranicznych, a zwłaszcza ze względu na nieznajomość tych spraw nawet pośród najwybitniejszych ludzi w Polsce.« Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Warszawie, Dział Rękopisów, sygnatura (file) 1562, kartka (folio) 43.

23 Ibid.

24 Among others, the following lectures and discussions were held: Tadeusz Hołówko on the nationality policies of the PPS, Stanisław Thugutt on the question of eastern Galicia, and Edward Maliszewski on relations among nationalities in Poland. See *ibid.*; Mirosław Boruta, »Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych (1921–1939). Z dziejów polskich badań naukowych nad problematyką etniczną.« *Przegląd Polonijny* 11, no. 2 (1985): 63–85, here 65. Maliszewski's lecture was published by the IBSN: Edward Maliszewski, *Stosunki narodowościowe w Polsce* (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych w

The following year, however, attempts were undertaken to revive the IBSN. When Władysław Grabski's government appointed an expert committee²⁶ on minority questions in 1925, the situation seemed to be promising for an institution that could provide expertise in the field and thus influence politics, especially as, of its three members, Aleksander Zwierzyński,²⁷ Leon Wasilewski, and Henryk Loewenherz,²⁸ the latter two had been connected to the institute.²⁹ In order to revive the institute, Tadeusz Hołówko began as director in December 1925,³⁰ and in early spring 1926, the IBSN sent a short announcement to the press, which presented the institute to the public and invited minority parties and organizations in Poland as well as Polish institutions dealing with minority issues to cooperate on the project.³¹ The description of the institute's activity had also been expanded somewhat, as it now explicitly mentioned its interest in Polish minorities abroad. The major difference from the early 1920's was that the IBSN now also aimed at becoming a political actor. In the attached description this was phrased in the following way:

The Institute for Nationality Research in Poland aims at providing the Polish society with an understanding of the life of national minorities in Poland through the publication of collected material, the submission of memoranda to the state authorities and legislators, and the organization of lectures and conferences. In

Polsce, 1923), while Hołówko published a pamphlet on his own: Tadeusz Hołówko, *Kwestia narodowościowa w Polsce* (Warszawa: Księgarnia Robotnicza, 1922). This was at least partly based on his lecture in the IBSN.

25 Boruta, »Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych,« 66.

26 »Dokumenty w sprawie polityki narodowościowej władz Polskich po przewrocie majowym,« *Dzieje Najnowsze* 3 (1972): 137–169, here 152.

27 Aleksander Zwierzyński (1880–1958), politician and journalist, 1922–1935 member of the Sejm, first for the *Związek Ludowo-Narodowy*, later for the *Stronnictwo Narodowe*, 1920–1938 editor of the *Dziennik Wileński. Encyklopedia Historii Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, s.v. »Aleksander Zwierzyński.«

28 Henryk Loewenherz (1871–1936), lawyer, politician, member of the Polish Sejm and Senate, until 1922 member of the Polish Socialist Party, delegate to the Paris peace conference, where he took part in the negotiations on the eastern Border of Poland, 1928 elected to the Sejm and 1930 to the Senate, both times on the list of the BBWR. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, s.v. »Henryk Loewenherz.«

29 Both of them were connected to the IBSN and the circles that had founded it, though their names were not mentioned in the declaration of 1926. They did however appear on the first published list of members of the institute of 1928. »Z Instytutu Badań Spraw Narodowościowych, Członkowie Rzeczywiści Instytutu,« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 2, no. 2 (1928): 309–310.

30 Stanisław J. Paprocki, »Ś.p. Tadeusz Hołówko wobec problemów narodowościowych,« in *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 5, no. 4–5 (1931): 381–398, here 381.

31 The declaration probably appeared in several journals and newspapers around April 1926. See »Instytut dla Badań Spraw Narodowościowych w Polsce,« *Droga*, no. 3–4 (1926): 80–81; »Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych w Polsce,« *Głos Prawdy*, April 17, 1926.

this way the institute intends to take part in the creation of the conditions necessary for the friendly and harmonious co-existence of the nationalities that are part of the Republic.³²

However, the real turning point came half a year later with the coup d'état of Józef Piłsudski, when the political conditions in Poland changed fundamentally and seemed to open up the opportunity for a different nationality policy.

The Redesign of the Institute after the Coup d'État of 1926

When Piłsudski and his followers seized power in May 1926 with a platform of »moral renewal« (*odnowa moralna*) and »recovery« (*sanacja*), expectations were high for the new administration. Among the problems to be solved by the new government, minority issues took a prominent place. As the representatives of national minorities perceived Piłsudski as generally friendly towards citizens of non-Polish nationality, the hope for a change in nationality policy seemed to be justified. Despite these hopes, however, the new government in fact remained silent on the topic.³³

In response to this silence, on June 16, 1926, the IBSN organized a discussion with Sejm members and other representatives of the Ukrainian and Belarusian population in Poland. Following this discussion and based on its outcome Hołówko held a lecture a week later, in which he developed a program of how the *Sanacja* – as Piłsudski's government was called referring to its slogan – should act in regard to the *Kresy*,³⁴ as the eastern territories of the Polish state were known, and to Eastern Galicia in order to satisfy the needs of their Ukrainian and Belarusian inhabitants.³⁵ He suggested a reform of the administration, the

32 »Instytut badań spraw narodowościowych w Polsce ma na celu przez publikowanie zgromadzonego materiału, składanie memorialów do władz państwowych i ustawodawczych, urządzenie odczytów, wykładów i konferencji przyczyniać się do bliższego poznania się społeczeństwa polskiego z życiem mniejszości narodowych w Polsce i w ten sposób współdziałać w wytworzeniu warunków przyjaznego i zgodnego współżycia narodowości wchodzące w skład Rzeczypospolitej.« »Instytut dla Badań Spraw Narodowościowych w Polsce,« *Droga*, 81.

33 Andrzej Chojnowski, *Koncepcje polityki narodowościowej rządów Polskich w latach 1921–1939* (Wrocław et al.: Ossolineum, 1979), 73–74.

34 The term *Kresy* literally means borderlands and has a somewhat mythical meaning, as it refers not only to the eastern territories of the Second Republic but also to the far larger eastern part of early modern Poland-Lithuania. Werner Benecke, »Die Kresy – Ein Mythos der polnischen Geschichte,« in *Politische Mythen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert in Mittel- und Osteuropa*, eds. Heidi Hein-Kircher and Hans Henning Hahn (Marburg: Verlag Herder Institut, 2006), 257–266.

35 »Dyskusję z mniejszościami narodowemi w Pałacu Książąt Mazowieckich,« *Głos Prawdy*, Juli 3, 1926. A reworked version of his lecture appeared as: Tadeusz

educational system and the regulation of religious questions. The Ukrainians and Belarusians were to be allowed to develop a »full national and cultural life according to the western European model.«³⁶

In August 1926, when the Council of Ministers dealt with minority issues, it became clear that there was no reason to expect rapid change. The Minister of Internal Affairs, Kazimierz Młodzianowski, enthusiastically presented his guidelines for the minority policy, which were based on the concept of »state assimilation« (*asymilacja państwową*). Its basic idea was that minorities should not be forced to become Poles by assimilation but instead loyal citizens of the Polish state, who enjoy the freedoms of cultural and social development in exchange for their loyalty. Młodzianowski's plan therefore specified numerous measures intended to accommodate the different minorities.³⁷

However, Piłsudski did not show much interest in pursuing political activism on the issue. As the protocol of the meeting recorded, he advised »not to overestimate the importance of this [minority] problem«, as the state could not »allow its vital interests to take a back seat«.³⁸ He was especially unwilling to make any compromises with regard to Polish being the sole state language, which had »to be taught in every school within the state's territory,« in which »all state activities« had to be conducted, and which had to be used by »courts, administration, and the local government.«³⁹ Taking into consideration that no political decision could be made without Piłsudski's consent after the May coup, his clear standpoint meant the end of any forthcoming reform regarding minority politics. Still, he pointed out that the government would need more detailed information on minority issues in order to make later decisions.⁴⁰

However, as was the case with most other political plans, such decisions were not communicated to the public. As Prime Minister Kazimierz Bartel stated, his government wanted to »keep quiet and work«.⁴¹ When Aleksander Zwierzyński, the representative of the National Democrats, resigned from the expert committee, Hołówko took his place,⁴² which could be understood as a reaction to

Hołówko, »Metody i drogi sanacji stosunków we wschodniej Galicji i województwach wschodnich,« *Droga*, no. 6–7 (1926): 46–55.

36 »życia narodowego i kulturalnego, na wzorach Zachodniej Europy,« *ibid.*, 47.

37 Madajczyk, »Dokumenty w sprawie polityki narodowościowej,« 140–142, 148–160.

38 »radzi nie przeceniać znaczenia tego problemu. Przy jego regulowaniu państwo nie może usuwać na drugi plan swoich zasadniczych interesów,« *ibid.*, 143.

39 *Ibid.*

40 *Ibid.*, 144.

41 Kazimierz Bartel, *Mowy parlamentarny* (Warszawa: Drukarnia Państwowa, 1928), 19. Quoted from Chojnowski, *Koncepcje polityki narodowościowej*, 74.

42 Chojnowski, *Koncepcje polityki narodowościowej*, 81 (for more details see footnote 57).

Hołówko's criticism. Henceforth all members of the committee were linked to the IBSN. However, this did not mean that the government was taking any of the steps Hołówko suggested concerning the politics in the *Kresy* and Galicia. Not being able to see any progress in the issue, he published several articles criticizing the lack of activity despite the fact that he was part of the Piłsudski camp himself.⁴³ Leon Wasilewski also made critical remarks in the press, although more measured ones.⁴⁴

As the discussions organized by the IBSN under Hołówko as well as its proactive support for a rapid reform of minority policy show, the institute was poised to establish itself as a driving force in the public debate on minority issues. This, of course, was not in the interest of the government, which did not want to be faced with a discussion on its minority policies. The government therefore set out to take steps to solve this dilemma: When Hołówko became director of the Eastern Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych*, MSZ) in early 1927, the post was surely an advancement to his career. Yet, as Andrzej Chojnowski pointed out, it was actually meant to deflect his activism in the inner-Polish debate on minority questions.⁴⁵ Hołówko's resignation as director of the IBSN soon after his appointment to the ministry post suggests that he accepted this compromise.⁴⁶

Around the time of Hołówko's resignation as director, there was a complete overhaul of the IBSN. It appears that government circles offered the institute an arrangement which seemed to be beneficial for both sides. Several ministries ensured stable financial support to the institute in exchange for access to its expertise and – just as importantly – for the institute to agree to cease any political activity.

The IBSN was thus included in a process of strategic realignment of the state's infrastructure for minority politics. While the aforementioned experts' committee was dissolved in 1927, the structure of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych*, MSW) was reorganized and a special Nationalities' Section (*Wydział Narodowościowy*) was established in 1927.⁴⁷ It was responsible for the supervision of the political and social lives of minority groups in Poland, as a means of keeping the government agencies informed, but

43 Ibid., 82–83.

44 *EPOKA*, May 3, 1927.

45 Chojnowski, *Koncepcje polityki narodowościowej*, 85–86.

46 At the meeting of the IBSN's Board of April 7, 1927, Hołówko's resignation as director of the institute was announced as a result of his new post in the MSZ. *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 1, no 2 (1927): 216.

47 ST. J. B., »O kompetencje Wydziału Narodowościowego Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych« *Przелом* 1, no. 9 (1926): 5–8.

was also responsible for the preparation of and advisement on laws and other legal measures concerning minorities. Still, the Nationalities' Section mostly acted at the administrative level, which led to certain restrictions to its outreach.

In this context, the IBSN seemed a promising partner, especially as many of its founders had been connected to the new government's camp.⁴⁸ The IBSN's task in this new network was indeed manifold. On the one hand, the institute was meant to make up for the lack of data on minorities, as Piłsudski had indicated. On the other hand, the informal contact the institute maintained with researchers and politicians from the different minority groups could be helpful with regard to new efforts in this field. This was especially important if one takes into account how politics functioned under Piłsudski, who despised the parliament along with party politics, and preferred matters to be regulated behind the scenes by men of trust.⁴⁹ In this regard, the IBSN was meant to function as a kind of intermediary between the minorities and the state agencies. In addition, the institute took on several functions in the sphere of international minority politics, which are beyond the scope of the present discussion.⁵⁰ To fulfill these functions in the intended way, the IBSN formally remained an independent institution. However, it changed in practice from a civil society initiative into a semi-official institution, which was almost entirely financed by state agencies, most prominently including the MSW, the MSZ, and the Ministry of Religion and Education (*Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego*, MWRIOP),⁵¹ and as such the institute had to remain neutral in the political debate.

The person mainly responsible for that transformation was Stanisław Józef Paprocki, who had been the councilor (*radca*) in charge of press supervision at the MSW from October 1925, and who joined the IBSN in January 1926 to run the institute's office. When it became clear in early 1927 that Hołówko would resign as director of the IBSN, Paprocki left the MSW and succeeded Hołówko as secretary general of the institute. From the middle of 1926 through 1929, Paprocki also served as the secretary general of the Union of the Reform of the Republic (*Związek Naprawy Rzeczypospolitej*, ZNR),⁵² which was the organization

48 This included Hołówko, Wasilewski, Handelsman, Loewenherz, and many more.

49 Chojnowski, *Pilsudczycy u władzy*, 33–36.

50 In this context the IBSN also observed the situation of the Polish minority abroad, the minority policy in other countries and neighboring countries in particular, and the international development of minority rights and the minority issue; see Boruta, »Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych« 66–68.

51 Stanisław J. Paprocki, interview, *Wiedza i Życie*, no. 2 (1931): 181–184; Boruta, »Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych« 66.

52 Archiwum Akt Nowych (hereafter AAN), Prezydium Rady Ministrów (hereafter PRM), sygn. *akta grupowe* 46–40, k. 10.

of the left-wing, democratic fraction of the Piłsudski camp.⁵³ Moreover, Paprocki was one of the proponents of the concept of »state assimilation«. As Paprocki put it in an article on the minority question in the ZNR Journal *Przełom* (»Breakthrough«) in February 1927, this meant that: »it is in the interest of the state that citizens who belong to national minorities should want to accept the interests of the state as their own.«⁵⁴

Under Paprocki, the institute reformed its statutes and outlined its fields of research in the following areas: 1. Minority issues in the international sphere, as well as in international law; 2. minority questions in Poland; and 3. minority problems outside Poland.⁵⁵ The IBSN created its three sections in line with these three areas.⁵⁶ In the context of this article, I will focus on the work of the second section dealing with *inner-Polish* affairs. That section was organized in several commissions, with one each for Jewish, Ukrainian, and German affairs, as well as one Russian and Czech and one for Lithuanian and Belarusian matters.⁵⁷ These commissions were usually composed of IBSN members as well as researchers and politicians of the respective minority groups. The commissions, which organized lectures and discussion events, were again subdivided into thematic groups. Aside from the above-mentioned meetings, the commissions were the most effective tool to gain representatives of certain minority groups for the institute.

With Paprocki at the head of the IBSN, the institute became more professional, changed its statutes, and began to publish the journal *Sprawy Narodowościowe* (SN). Many articles published in the journal also appeared in the abridged French edition *Questions Minoritaires*, which the institute began publishing in 1928. The SN, which is still a widely used source for researchers, also demonstrated the close links between the IBSN and the Nationalities' Section of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The officials of the Nationalities' Section regularly published articles in *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, though without mentioning who their employer was. Aside from Aleksander Hafftka,⁵⁸ head of

53 On the ZNR, see Przemysław Waingertner, »Naprawa« (1926–1939): z dziejów obozu pomajowego (Warszawa: Semper, 1999).

54 Stanisław J. Paprocki, »Interes państwa i mniejszości narodowe,« *Przełom* 2, no. 4 (1926): 2.

55 AAN, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych (hereafter MSZ), sygn. 5314, k. 21.

56 Boruta, »Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych,« 66–67.

57 *Ibid.*

58 Aleksander Hafftka (1892–1964), Polish state official, publicist, 1920–1922 official in the Central Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1924–1925 editor of the daily *Głos powszechny* (General Voice) in Częstochowa, 1927–1937 councilor for Jewish affairs in the Ministry of Internal Affairs; *Yidisher Gezel-shaftelekher Leksikon*, s.v. »Aleksander Haftka.«

the Jewish division of the Nationalities' Section from 1927 to 1937, the articles were all published under pen names,⁵⁹ even those written by the officials of other ministries. Another hint pointing to close ties was a chronicle of events for the various minorities in Poland, published as a regular section of the SN. The reports published in the journal often seem to be shortened – and thus less detailed – versions of those that were written by the Nationalities' Section.⁶⁰

In October 1927, according to its new statute, the IBSN board of directors appointed 34 full members, a number which roughly doubled by the time the institute ceased to exist in September 1939. Many of its founders remained members, including Handelsman, Thugutt, Hołówko, and Wasilewski, to be joined by other well-known scholars like Stanisław Kutrzeba⁶¹ and Florian Znaniecki.⁶² Membership was also a tool to strengthen ties to a number of representatives of minority groups such as Majer Bałaban, Mojżesz Schorr, Stefan Lubliner,⁶³ Roman Smal-Stocki, and Ivan Ohienko.⁶⁴ While most of the IBSN's work was conducted by the institute's office, managed by Paprocki, its members took part in several commissions, organized and held lectures, and wrote articles for the SN.

In summer 1929, Paprocki described the outcome of the institute's changes in a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, asking for more subsidies:

59 Zygmunt Kalksein, responsible for Germans in Poland, published articles in *Sprawy Narodowościowe* and a book in the IBSN series as Zygmunt Stoliński; Rajmund Różycki, dealing with Ukrainians, published in *Sprawy Narodowościowe* as M. Feliński; Stanisław Łaniewski, who worked on Belarusians in the MSW, published as Stanisław Ełski.

60 Some of the reports in *Sprawy Narodowościowe* on the Jews in Poland were even signed by Aleksander Hafftka, who was responsible for the reports on Jewish affairs in his ministry office. It seems very unlikely that he wrote two completely different reports on the same questions.

61 Stanisław Kutrzeba (1876–1946), scholar and politician, professor at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków and head of the Polish Acadamy of Arts and Sciences (1939–1946), in 1918 member of the Polish delegation to the Treaty of Versailles negotiations. *Encyklopedia Historii Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, s. v. »Stanisław Kutrzeba.«

62 Florian Znaniecki, born 1882 in Świątniki, founder of the Polish Sociological Institute in Poznań in 1921 and 1920–1939, professor at the Adam Mickiewicz University there, being in New York when WWII began, he stayed in the USA; *Internationales Soziologenlexikon*, 2nd ed., s. v. »Florian Znaniecki.«

63 Stefan Lubliner (1890–1942), journalist, editor of the monthly Polish-Jewish *Rozwaga* (Reflection), volunteer in Piłsudski's Legions during World War I. *Getto Warszawskie*, s. v. »Stefan Lubliner,« <http://www.getto.pl> (accessed August 8, 2014).

64 »Z Instytutu Badań Spraw Narodowościowych, Członkowie Rzeczywiści Instytutu,« in: *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 2, no. 2 (1928): 309–310.

The well planned organization of the institute had, on the one hand, ensured its *social* nature [emphasis in the original text], which allowed for unofficial contact with representatives of national minorities and related institutions abroad, while on the other hand, it placed the institute's work on the right track, eliminating political aspects (the establishment of a program in the field of nationality policy), and replaced them by strictly scholarly work. This had the aim of enabling the institute to determine the relevant factors necessary for the establishment of political proposals, while leaving the formulation of such proposals to political organizations and government agents.⁶⁵

What Paprocki expressed in the bureaucratic language of the time was not necessarily the description of the IBSN as it worked – as it was surely not as apolitical as described by Paprocki – but rather as the Polish government agencies considered it to be expedient for their means: an institution providing the government with scholarly collected data. At the same time, it served as an unofficial channel of communication, through which it was possible to obtain information on the state of affairs of minority communities and to stay in contact with all of the political camps among them, regardless of government policies.

From the perspective of the minorities, however, the IBSN was expected to become an institution that would communicate their interests to Polish society and to political decision makers. This notion was demonstrated in an article by Natan Szwalbe,⁶⁶ in the Jewish daily *Nasz Przegląd*, which appeared a few days after the IBSN meeting mentioned at the beginning of this article. Szwalbe expressed his hope that the IBSN would function as an intermediary not only with regard to Poland's Jews but also to Germans, Belarusians, and most of all Ukrainians.⁶⁷ He argued that the IBSN could play a:

valuable role if it initiated a broad campaign to raise awareness in Polish society and demonstrated the need for the quickest possible counteraction to the Soviet

65 »W ten sposób pomyślana organizacja instytutu z jednej strony zapewniała mu charakter *społeczny*, umożliwiający nieoficjalny kontakt z przedstawicielami mniejszości narodowych i instytucjami pokrewnymi zagranicą, z drugiej zaś strony wprowadziła prace instytutu na właściwe tory, eliminując momenty polityczne (ustalenia programu w zakresie polityki narodowoścowej) a na ich miejsce wprowadzając prace ściśle badawcze, mające na celu ustalenie elementów niezbędnych dla wyprowadzenia wniosków politycznych, pozostawiając sformułowania tych wniosków organizacjom politycznym i czynnikom rządowym.« AAN, MSZ, sygn. 5314, k. 22.

66 Natan Szwalbe, born 1883, journalist, editor at the Jewish daily *Nasz Przegląd*, head of the press office of the Zionist Organization in Poland. *Baza osób polskich – Polnische Personendatenbank*, s.v. »Natan Szwalbe,« <http://baza-nazwisk.de> (accessed August 2, 2014).

67 *Nasz Przegląd*, May 25, 1928.

influence, which would be a positive and constructive cultural and educational measure among the Ukrainians living in Poland.⁶⁸

Concerning the other nationalities, especially Jews and Germans, the task of the IBSN

»would be much easier if only the decision makers (*sfery miarodajne*) listened to the discussions and conversations held by the institute's direction in a sincere and friendly atmosphere.«⁶⁹

Szwalbe's article shows that the approach of the IBSN – not only towards the discussion of and research into the problems of the different national minorities in Poland but also in terms of having their representatives participate in that process on equal terms – was quite successful as a means of gaining the trust of those circles that were in favor of cooperating with the Polish government to find a balanced solution to the minorities question. Still, they also were aware that the actual influence of the IBSN on the political leadership was rather limited and uncertain. Or, as Szwalbe summarized, »[...] for the moment, this is only wishful thinking. We are still far from fulfilling the promises of the May coup slogans in the field of nationality policy.«⁷⁰

In contrast to Szwalbe's suggestions, the IBSN did not especially aim at influencing public opinion. Instead it provided the government and its ministries with processed information on the respective issues and – much more importantly – it organized gatherings and lecture series, thus providing a space, where »both sides of the barricade« could meet and exchange their thoughts in an informal manner, and where minorities could lobby for their interests.

The legal regulation of the status of religious communities was a field of minority policy that touched the vital interests of a large portion of the national minority population. This was caused by the correlation of religious and national belonging: Lutheran Christians were usually German in national terms, while Greek Catholics were Ukrainian, and Roman Catholics were considered to be Poles and vice versa.⁷¹ Therefore, attempts to regulate the legal basis of religious

68 »Instytut Badań mógłby w tym przypadku odegrać wdzięczną rolę, gdyby rozwinął wśród społeczeństwa polskiego szeroką akcję uświadamiającą i uwiodocznił potrzebę najrychlejszego przeciwdziałania wpływom sowieckim za pomocą pozytywnej, twórczej pracy kulturalno-oświatowej wśród ukraińców zamieszkujących państwo polskie.« Ibid.

69 »miałyby znacznie łatwiejsze zadanie, gdyby sfery miarodajne zechciały się przystosować dyskusjom i rozmowom, prowadzonym w atmosferze szczerej i zyczliwej.« Ibid.

70 »Są to jednak na razie pobożne tylko życzenia, jesteśmy wciąż jeszcze dość dalecy od realizacji hasel, głoszonych podczas przewrotu majowego w dziedzinie polityki narodowościowej.« Ibid.

71 This rule, of course, had many exceptions and its perception was stronger in the minds of the people than was its reality. For example, there were also Jews who

communities were inseparably connected with nationality politics. This was a field in which the IBSN possessed sound expertise and access to the relevant personalities from the religious communities, and the government – in need of such knowledge and connections – made use of what its think tank had to offer.

As mentioned above, except for the Catholic Churches, whose legal status was settled in the Concordat with the Vatican of 1925,⁷² the status of the other confessions was still only partly or provisionally regulated in the late 1920s. Many regulations concerning the Jewish community and Orthodox Church were not in fact issued until the 1930s. Apart from their strictly religious tasks, the two institutions also fulfilled cultural and social roles for their adherents so that they were also of great interest to Ukrainian and Jewish politicians in Poland, as they held the potential to serve as important forms of support for national movements. In both cases, the IBSN was involved in the gathering of information for such law-making processes. While the members of the institute provided Polish officials with expertise on relevant topics, the institute also served as a forum for Ukrainian and Jewish representatives to make their suggestions known and to lobby for their positions.

The Ukrainization of the Orthodox Church

In 1927, *Sprawy Narodowościowe* already printed an article on the »The Nationality Dispute in the Orthodox Church in Poland«.⁷³ In the article, Mykola Kovalevskyi,⁷⁴ an exiled Ukrainian politician and a regular IBSN collaborator,

considered themselves to be Poles of Mosaic faith, Lutheran Ukrainians, Greek Catholic Poles, and most of all many who did not define themselves in national terms, as for example the so-called *tutejsi* (literally meaning locals). Felix Ackermann argues in his study on the city of Grodno that the categorization of the population along national lines resulted from the founding of Poland as a nation state, which created the need to assign every person to a national group. The Polish administration thus often applied the categories of native language and confession as ethnic factors to this end. Felix Ackermann, *Palimpsest Grodno. Nationalisierung, Nivellierung und Sowjetisierung einer mitteleuropäischen Stadt 1919–1991* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 25–27.

72 On the concordat, see Krasiewski, *Związki Wyznaniowe*, 73–82.

73 Mikołaj Kowalewski, »Spór narodowościowy w Cerkwi Prawosławnej w Polsce,« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 1, no. 3 (1927): 259–269.

74 Mykola Kovalevskyi, pol. Mikołaj Kowalewski (1892–1957), politician and publicist, activist of the Ukrainian national movement in tsarist Russia, member of the Central Rada of the Ukrainian National Republic, 1917–1918 Minister of Food Supply, 1918–1920 Minister of Agriculture in the Directorate government, after the failure of Ukrainian independence émigré in Poland, worked for the Promethean »Agencja Telegraficzna Express« and the Instytut Wschodni. Mykola Kovalev's'kyi, *Pry Dzherelakh Borotby* (Innsbruck: Maria Kovalevska, 1960), dust jacket text.

described the conflict between the Orthodox Church hierarchy, whose members were mainly of Russian nationality, and Ukrainians from Wolhynia. According to Kovalevskyi, the Ukrainian Orthodox wanted to bring about certain ecclesiastical reforms such as the introduction of the Ukrainian language for sermons and at mass. Laymen also demanded a return to the historical Ukrainian tradition of the Orthodox Church in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which would have allowed for more lay influence on the development of the church, »for in the times before the partitions, when the borders of the Polish state reached to the Dnieper, democratic principles dominated in the governance of church matters and in the life of the Orthodox Church.«⁷⁵ As the text argues further, this practice had only been replaced later under tsarist rule by a more authoritarian system which suppressed the Ukrainian national character of the church. In »reborn Poland«, Kovalevskyi continued, the desire to return to the old tradition and free itself from the paternalism of the Russian hierarchy was brewing among the Ukrainian population.⁷⁶

The conflict within the Orthodox Church became visible at a time when the legal status of the Church was still unclear and was only based on the »Provisional Regulations on the Relations of the Government to the Orthodox Church in Poland« of 1922.⁷⁷ After the May coup, Orthodox Ukrainian church activists hoped that the new government would introduce a more elaborated legal basis for Orthodoxy. As they saw it, of course, this change was hoped to meet their interests rather than those of the predominantly Russian hierarchy, so that they promoted a reform process from within. By 1924 the church had already achieved autocephalous status, i.e. it was an autonomous Orthodox Church in Poland that had cut its ties to the Moscow Patriarchate.⁷⁸ As described by Kovalevskyi, the aim was mainly to strengthen the role of the Ukrainian language – and thus of the Ukrainians – within the church and to establish a structure based on the traditions of conciliarity (*sobornist'*), which guaranteed greater lay influence within the church.⁷⁹

75 »W czasach przedrozbiorowych bowiem, kiedy granicy państwa polskiego sięgały po Dniepr, w życiu cerkwi prawosławnej dominowała zasada demokratycznego rządzenia sprawami cerkiewnymi.« Kowalewski, »Spór narodowościowy,« 261.

76 Ibid., 261.

77 Cornelia Schenke, *Nationalstaat und nationale Frage. Polen und die Ukrainer in Wolhynien (1921–1939)*, (Hamburg–München: Dölling und Galitz, 2004), 194–199; Werner Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete der Zweiten Polnischen Republik. Staatsmacht und öffentliche Ordnung in einer Minderheitenregion 1918–1939* (Köln–Weimar–Wien: Böhlau, 1999), 202.

78 Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete der Zweiten Polnischen Republik*, 201–204.

79 Miroslawa Papierzyńska-Turek, *Miedzy tradycją a rzeczywistością. Państwo wobec prawosławia* (Warszawa: PWN, 1989), 207.

However, the ideological underpinnings of this grassroots movement in Wolhynia had been prepared by scholars such as Ivan Ohienko, who had been a professor at the Institute for Orthodox Theology (*Studium Teologii Prawosławnej*, STP)⁸⁰ at Warsaw University since 1926. In August 1928 he was joined by Oleksandr Lototskyi,⁸¹ who became a professor at the STP as well. After the February Revolution of 1917, they had been ministers in different Ukrainian governments. After Ukrainian independence had failed, both became professors in Prague in the early 1920s, before they resettled in Warsaw. There they became members of the IBSN.⁸² In their work, they tried to demonstrate the original Ukrainian character of the Orthodox Church in Kievan Rus, which in their view was only later subordinated by force to the Moscow Patriarchate. According to Lototskyi, who was among the founders of the Autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church in 1919,⁸³ having a particular national character was in fact one of the distinctive elements of the eastern churches.⁸⁴

When the conflict between the Ukrainianization movement and the Russian-oriented camp – to a large extent a conflict between laymen and clerics – surfaced in early 1927, Metropolitan Dionizy⁸⁵ tried to mediate in the conflict but ultimately took the side of those closer to the clerics. The advocates of Ukrainianization in turn organized a Ukrainian Orthodox Church Congress, which took place in Lutsk in April 1927. The event outraged the leadership of the

80 Ibid., 82.

81 Oleksander Lototskyi, in Polish also Aleksander Łotocki (1870–1939), politician, theologian and church historian, minister of Religion in the Ukrainian government in 1918, one of the founders of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in 1919, after 1920 émigré in Vienna and Prague, member of the government in exile of the Ukrainian National Republic, since 1929 professor for church history at the Institute for Orthodox Theology (STP) of Warsaw University, 1930–1939 director of the Ukrainian Scientific Institute in Warsaw. *Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, s.v. »Oleksander Lotocky.«

82 Ohienko was a member of the institute since 1928 already. See »Z Instytutu Badań Spraw Narodowościowych, Członkowie Rzeczywiscy Instytutu,« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 2, no 2 (1928): 309; Lotocky's name appears in the member list of the IBSN of 1932, which was printed in: *Dziesięciolecie działalności Instytutu Badań Spraw Narodowościowych 1922–1932* (Warszawa: Instytut Badań Spraw Narodowościowych, 1932).

83 Andre Partykevich, *Between Kyiv and Constantinople. Oleksander Lotocky and the Quest for Ukrainian Autocephaly* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1998), 27–42.

84 Aleksander Łotocki, *Autokefalia, Zasady Autokefalii* (Warszawa: Biblioteka Polska, 1932), 121–122.

85 Dionizy, secular name Konstanty Waledyński (1876–1960), Orthodox bishop, Metropolitan of Warsaw and all Poland, head of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church from 1924–1948. *Kto był kim w Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej*, s.v. »Konstanty Waledyński.«

church even more, who repudiated the lay right to convene such an assembly. Consequently the Synod of Bishops of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church prohibited all clergy members from participating. However, the congress did convene and was composed exclusively of laymen who demanded more rights for the Ukrainians as well as an all-Polish council (*sobór*). Its resolutions were printed in *Sprawy Narodowościowe*.⁸⁶ The church leadership reacted with an eparchial assembly two months later, which proclaimed more or less the opposite of the Ukrainian demands. Finally, in summer 1927 both sides started extensive petition campaigns that aimed to win the support of the Ministry of Religion and Education.⁸⁷

The IBSN was another possible channel to influence the government in favor of support for the Ukrainian side. Among its members was – in addition to Ohienko and Lototskyi – Kazimierz Okulicz,⁸⁸ who served from August 1926 to October 1928 as director of the Department for Non-Catholic Confessions in the Ministry of Religion and Education. The first visible activity in this context was the previously mentioned article by Mykola Kovalevskyi, who described the conflict with a strong preference for the Ukrainian side. This account was nevertheless published in a Polish scholarly journal, which was probably one of the main sources of information for vast parts of the administration concerned with these matters, so that its impact should not be underestimated. Another occasion, which the supporters of Ukrainization supposedly used to promote their cause, was the »social gathering« of the IBSN in May 1928, at which Okulicz, Ohienko, and Kovalevskyi were present.⁸⁹ Though it is not documented who talked to whom or what had been the content of the »animated conversations,« the participants most likely used the occasion to exchange their ideas on the shape and legal basis of the Orthodox Church in Poland.

Indeed the idea of Ukrainization of the Orthodox Church found some support within the Ministry of Religion and Education during the year 1928. In the same issue that reported about the »social gathering«, another article on

86 *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 1, no. 4 (1927): 398–405.

87 Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete der Zweiten Polnischen Republik*, 225–229.

88 Kazimierz Okulicz (1890–1981), politician, journalist and government official, worked for several institutions of the short-lived Republic of Central Lithuania (1920–1922), from 1926–1928 Director of the Confessional Department of the MWRIOP, 1928–1930 member of the Sejm, 1928–1939 member of the editorial board of »Kurier Wileński.« Paweł A. Leszczyński, *Centralna administracja wyznaniowa II RP. Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego* (Warszawa: Semper, 2006), 262.

89 »Z Instytutu Badań Spraw Narodowościowych, Członkowie Rzeczywści Instytutu,« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 2, no. 2 (1928): 310.

the nationalities issues and system of the Orthodox Church in Poland appeared.⁹⁰ It was published under the pen name Wiktor Lubicz, which was used by Wiktor Piotrowicz,⁹¹ who in 1928 for a short time was head of the section for Christian Confessions in the ministry.⁹² In his article Piotrowicz evaluates the developments in the Orthodox Church and the pros and cons of the conciliar system from the Polish state's point of view. He came to the conclusion that the nationalization – he also included the much weaker movement for Belarusization in his considerations – would be generally beneficial for the state. He argued that the nationalization of the church would bind the population closer to it and thus lead to the »distraction of the population from the negative influences of communist and seditious propaganda.«⁹³ He stressed, however, that a campaign of nationalization through the introduction of Ukrainian and Belarusian into ecclesiastical life as well as its democratization through the introduction of the *sobornist'* would also strengthen the national movements of the respective population groups:

And that is exactly where the need emerges – seen from the state's point of view – to distinguish between the church's objectives and political goals and to direct the national movements within the church along a path of loyalty towards the state.⁹⁴

Still, Piotrowicz advocated the reform of the Orthodox Church more or less along the lines the Ukrainianization movement had drawn, as he considered it to be a return to the historical tradition of the Polish Orthodox Church. That was, for him, a way to sever the church's connection to Russian Orthodoxy. The importance of this point for the Polish state originated mainly in the fear that Russia could try to interfere with Polish internal matters under the pretext of supporting Orthodoxy, as it had in 18th-century Poland-Lithuania.⁹⁵

90 Wiktor Lubicz [Piotrowicz], »Z zagadnień narodowościowych i ustrojowych w Cerkwi Prawosławnej w Polsce,« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 2, no. 2 (1928): 169–190.

91 Wiktor Piotrowicz (1900–1954), publicist and government official, head of the Confessional Department of the Vilna Province administration, in the second half of the 1930s councilor for in the Press Office of the MSW, author of essays and books on confessional questions. *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 26, 453–454.

92 Leszczyński, *Centralna administracja*, 269.

93 »do odwrócenia uwagi tej ludności od ujemnych wpływów propagandy komunistycznej i wywrotowej,« Lubicz, »Z zagadnień narodowościowych,« 182.

94 »I tu właśnie powstała potrzeba – z państwowego punktu widzenia – odróżnienia celów cerkiewnych od politycznych i skierowania tego ruchu narodowościowego w Cerkwi na drogę państwej lojalności.« Ibid., 184.

95 Ibid., 178–179, 189.

This positive evaluation of the Ukrainianization movement was also supported by Gustaw Dobrucki, the minister in charge of religious affairs. At a conference of referents for the religious affairs of the eastern provinces, he pleaded for the friendly treatment of the Orthodox Church and acknowledged his support for the democratization of the Orthodox Church as well as the introduction of the languages of the respective population groups into ecclesiastical life.⁹⁶ A few days later, however, Prime Minister Piłsudski stepped down from his office and dismissed his government. Under the new Prime Minister, Kazimierz Bartel, the office of the Minister for Religion and Public Education was taken by Kazimierz Świtalski, who had less liberal views on the issue than Dobrucki. In the course of the following months Piotrowicz and Okulicz also left the ministry.⁹⁷

The loss of these officials, who had supported the Ukrainianization movement, was a severe throwback, as lobbying had to start anew under different circumstances. Another attempt was undertaken by Ivan Ohienko on January 28, 1929 with a lecture organized by the IBSN as a part of a lecture series on the Ukrainian question. Its title was »The Fate of the Ukrainian Church and Her Current State«.⁹⁸ Ohienko's attempt to win over Polish government officials for a policy of Ukrainianization was mainly based on a twofold argumentation: First, he idealized the historic relations between an Orthodox Church, as he describes it, of Ukrainian national character and the early modern Polish rulers. According to him, the early modern *Rzeczpospolita* was »extremely important in the history of the Ukrainian church«.⁹⁹ Ohienko presented it as a period in which church life flourished and was able to develop its full Ukrainian character with Ukrainian as the language of the Orthodox Church and a fully developed system of conciliarity as the church's inner system of organization. He connected the image of positive historical relations between Poland and the Orthodox Church of Ukrainian character to the present, referring to the recognition of the autocephalous state of the Polish Orthodox Church in 1924 as an act of historical justice:

We Ukrainians have finally received satisfaction [...] It is on November 13, 1924 that autocephaly was established in Poland. [...] The Muscovite church is not entitled to the Orthodox Church in Poland. Almost 300 years have passed since the violation of the Ukrainian Church but satisfaction was received.¹⁰⁰

96 Papierzyńska-Turek, *Miedzy tradycją a rzeczywistością*, 239–240.

97 Leszczyński, *Centralna administracja*, 239, 262, 269.

98 The text, including the following discussion, was printed in *Sprawy Narodowościowe*. Jan Ogijenko (Ivan Ohienko), »Losy Cerkwi ukraińskiej i jej stan obecny«, *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 3, no. 1 (1929): 175–183.

99 »nader ważne w historii cerkwi ukraińskiej,« *ibid.*, 175.

100 »My Ukraincy, otrzymaliśmy satysfakcję. [...] Jest [to] z dnia 13 listopada 1924 r. zaprowadzenie autokefalii w Polsce. [...] cerkiew moskiewska nie ma żadnych

In this quote the second part of Ohienko's argumentation line surfaces as well, in which he emphasizes the anti-Russian sentiment of the Ukrainianization movement in order to demonstrate its common interest with the Polish state. But while many Poles saw the Russian Orthodox Church as a part of the tsarist Russification policy of the Polish lands – an attitude manifested in the demolition of the Orthodox Cathedral at Saxon Square in Warsaw as an act of symbolic liberation in the first years of Polish independence¹⁰¹ – Ohienko claimed that the originally Ukrainian Orthodox Church had been a victim of the same Russification policy: In the former territories of the *Rzeczpospolita*, the church had been destroyed by the Tsars and Russian Orthodox hierarchy, a policy that the Soviet rulers had recently repeated after the short period of Ukrainian independence, which resulted from the February Revolution of 1917.¹⁰²

Even though this argumentation was more or less based on the same ideas the Ukrainianization movement had used before, Ohienko changed the strategy to some extent: He did not openly demand the Ukrainianization of the Orthodox Church. Instead he tried to give new direction to the aims of the movement and avoided the word »Ukrainization«:

I reject this term, because it is not about Ukrainianization, but exclusively about *de-Russification* [emphasis in the original]: The Ukrainian population is longing for the state of affairs of pre-partition Poland. [...] It is mainly about the return to that rightful ecclesiastical system and culture that once already existed in Poland; it is foremost about sermons in the people's language, education in their native language.¹⁰³

The fear that support for the movement could foster a Ukrainian national movement which could possibly be hostile to Poland was one of the main concerns of Polish politicians. Ohienko took this fear seriously, introducing a historical angle, which was meant to prove that the Orthodox Church in Poland should ideally have a Ukrainian character. This strategy culminated in his final appeal:

The Polish nation always says: Poland has risen from the dead. Yes, Poland has risen from the dead. We, the Ukrainians, expected that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church would also receive the opportunity to rise from the dead, but until today

uprawień w stosunku do cerkwi prawosławnej w Polsce. Prawie 300 lat minęło od czasu pogwałcenia cerkwi ukraińskiej ale satysfakcja nastąpiła.« Ibid., 179.

101 Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete der Zweiten Polnischen Republik*, 199–201.

102 Ogijenko, »Losy Cerkwi ukraińskiej,« 175–180.

103 »ten termin odrzucam, ponieważ nie o ukrainizację chodzi, a chodzi wyłącznie o *derusyfikację* [emphasis in the original]: pragnie ludność ukraińska tego co było w Polsce przedrozbiorowej. [...] chodzi głównie o przywrócenie tego prawnego ustroju i kultury cerkwi, które już były w Polsce; chodzi przedewszystkiem o kazaniu w języku ludowym, o nauczanie w języku macierzystym.« Ibid., 181.

that did not happen. Poland has risen from the dead but it left all the Russian remnants in the Ukrainian Church just as they had been in the times of [Tsar] Peter [I.] and [Tsarina] Catherine.¹⁰⁴

Though the precise extent of the influence of this lecture cannot be evaluated, the struggle for structural reform and the introduction of the Ukrainian language would attain some success in the following years, mainly in Wolhynia, where Voivode Henryk Józefski adopted and supported this policy and even established a Ukrainian bishop.¹⁰⁵ Another success was the convocation of an all-Polish council (*sobór*) in 1930 by Polish President Ignacy Mościcki, with Ivan Ohienko even preparing a series of memorials for the event.¹⁰⁶ Since the mid-1930s, however, the Polish government withdrew from this type of policy, instead enforcing the Polonization of the Orthodox Church.¹⁰⁷

The IBSN's Research on the Jewish Community and the Development of its Legal Status

One of the first announcements in the newly created Journal *Sprawy Narodowościowe* involved the Jewish section of the institute, which was preparing a survey of the Jewish communities in Poland. The decision to do so was made during a session of the Jewish section in late March 1927.¹⁰⁸ Roughly two months later, the section agreed upon the text of the accompanying questionnaire, which was printed in the following issue.¹⁰⁹ The background of the study was the fact that five different bodies of legislation governing Jewish communities were then in force in Poland at the same time.¹¹⁰ The questionnaire

104 »Naród Polski wszędzie mówi: Polska zmartwychstała. Tak, Polska zmartwychstała. Ale my, Ukraińcy, oczekiwaliśmy, że będzie dana możliwość wstać z martwych również i prawosławnej cerkwi ukraińskiej w Polsce, ale do dziś dnia to nie nastąpiło. Polska zmartwychstała ale pozostawiła wszystkie pozostałości rosyjskie w ukraińskiej cerkwi, tak, jak były one za czasów Piotra i Katarzyny.« *Ibid.* 182.

105 Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War. A Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 147–167. The administration in other regions, however, did not support such a policy. Papierzyńska-Turek, *Miedzy tradycją a rzeczywistością*, 240–242.

106 AAN, MWRIOP, sygn. 997, k. 3–102.

107 Schenke, *Nationalstaat und nationale Frage*, 271–281.

108 »Z Instytutu Badań Spraw Narodowościowych,« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 1, no. 2 (1927): 216.

109 »Z Instytutu Badań Spraw Narodowościowych, Komisja żydowska,« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 1, no. 3 (1927): 328–329.

110 As the laws of the former partitioning powers remained in force with only minor restrictions, the legal status of the Jewish Communities differed between the former Prussian Greater Poland, the former Austrian Lesser Poland, the former

elicited data such as the size of each community, the number of taxpayers and the range of the amounts paid, the political composition of the community and its administrative board, as well as the date of the last community board elections. It also contained specific questions concerning Lesser Poland (*Małopolska*) and the western provinces. The questionnaire was sent to over 500 Jewish communities in western, central, and southeastern Poland in March 1928.¹¹¹

The background for this was the government's effort to regulate the legal basis of the Jewish communities, which the pre-May governments had failed to accomplish despite several initiatives launched by Jewish Sejm deputies.¹¹² The Jewish section of the institute wanted to support the new legislative initiative with information on the structure and functioning of the Jewish communities. As the authorities had not collected any such data,¹¹³ the survey was introduced to fill the gap and provide the legislators with information.

As neither the IBSN's archive nor the files concerning the Jewish communities of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education have been preserved, it is not possible to reconstruct which information and suggestions, if any, the IBSN sent to the ministry apart from the summary published in *Sprawy Narodowościowe*.¹¹⁴ Nor can its possible influence on law-making be quantified. Nevertheless, it is a good example to demonstrate the functions of the IBSN. The Jewish Commission of the IBSN, along with others, consisted not only of members of the institute but also of a number of outsiders. Among them were many Jewish politicians such as the Bundist Wiktor Alter,¹¹⁵ the Zionists

Russian territories in the east and northeast, and the Kingdom of Poland. Yet another body of legislation applied to Upper Silesia, which came under Polish rule after the partition of that region between Germany and Poland in 1922.

111 Izaak Bornstein, »O działalności żydowskich gmin wyznaniowych w Polsce« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 2, no. 6 (1928): 707–718, here 709. In the northeastern territories, no communities existed at the time, or at least as legal bodies, as they had no legal basis in the Russian Empire (except for the Kingdom of Poland). In Poland this legal basis was only introduced in 1927 and the communities there were recognized as organizations under public law the following year.

112 Jolanta Żyndul, *Państwo w Państwie? Autonomia narodowo-kulturalna w Europie śródziemnomorskiej i środkowoschodniej* (Warszawa: DiG, 2000), 112–122.

113 Bornstein, »O działalności żydowskich gmin wyznaniowych,« 708.

114 Ibid.

115 Wiktor Alter (1890–1943), politician, leader of the Jewish »Bund« Socialist Party, and secretary general of the General Council of Jewish Trade Unions in Poland, from 1927–1936 alderman in the Warsaw City Council. *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, s.v. »Wiktor Alter,« <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org> (accessed August 1, 2014).

Apolinary Hartglas,¹¹⁶ Ignacy Schiper, and Fiszel Rottenstreich,¹¹⁷ Izaak Rubinstein¹¹⁸ of the *Mizrahi* religious Zionists, and Aron Lewin¹¹⁹ of the orthodox *Agudas Yisroel*. The last two were also rabbis – Rubinstein in Wilna and Lewin in Sambor – as was Mojżesz Schorr at the Great Synagogue in Warsaw.¹²⁰ Such public figures were obviously much better suited to gain the trust of Jewish communities than any state officials would, as they were much better informed about their ways of working and, most of all, were not considered to be complete outsiders. The different political backgrounds of the commission members, moreover, made it clear that a variety of approaches was represented in the commission with regard to how Jewish communities should be organized and what their roles should be.

The social role of the Jewish community was highly controversial, not only within Jewish political circles, but also between Polish state institutions and Jewish politicians. While the dispute among Jewish representatives over the communities' character mainly arose from the question of whether it should be an institution only accessible to religious Jews – as the Orthodox saw it – or whether it should be an institution that serves all those who considered themselves to be of Jewish nationality, although not necessarily religious. The latter position was shared by almost all non-religious Jewish parties, including the Zionist Organization (often known as the General Zionists), the two *Po'ale Zion* parties, the Folkists, and the socialist, anti-Zionist *Bund*. Consequently, all Jewish parties, regardless of their views on religion, ran for community board elections to secure their influence on Jewish life. This led to fierce power struggles within the community boards between secular and religious Jewish

116 Apolinary Hartglas (1883–1953), politician and lawyer, member and in the 2nd half of the 1930s president of the Zionist Organization in Poland, member of the Sejm from 1919–1930. *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, s.v. »Apolinary Hartglas,« <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org> (accessed August 1, 2014).

117 Fiszel Rottenstreich (1880–1938), lawyer, politician, and publicist, member of the Galician Zionist Organisation, from 1922–1928 member of the Senate and 1930–1935 of the Sejm, also director of the Department of Trade, Industry and Finance of the World Zionist Organisation. Szymon Rudnicki, *Żydzi w parlamencie II Rzeczypospolitej* (Wydawnictwo Sejmowe: Warszawa, 2004), 417.

118 Izaak Rubinstein (1880–1945), rabbi, politician, member and chairman of the party committee of Mizrahi, Polish senator from 1922–1939. *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, s.v. »Yitshak Rubinstein,« <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org> (accessed August 1, 2014).

119 Aron Lewin, (1879–1941), politician and Orthodox rabbi, member of Agudah Yisroel, from 1927 chief rabbi of Rzeszów, member of the Sejm from 1930–1935. *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, s.v. »Lewin Brothers,« <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org> (accessed August 1, 2014).

120 »Z Instytutu Badań Spraw Narodowościowych,« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 1, no. 1 (1927): 87–89, here 88–89.

parties, which were mainly concentrated on the allocation of funds for organizations attached to the different parties.¹²¹ Despite this conflict, however, there was a consensus that the activities of the Jewish community should not only be restricted to religious affairs but should also include a wide variety of matters such as education, culture, and social welfare. Many Jewish politicians, especially secular politicians, also believed that the Jewish community should serve as a basis for the establishment of Jewish cultural autonomy,¹²² though the specifics of how such autonomy should work were – like many other issues in Jewish politics – still disputed.

In the newly created Polish state after World War I, such a concept could not win the support of Józef Piłsudski, who was then the country's head of state, nor could Jewish politicians persuade members of the Polish parliament of it.¹²³ In the decree on the changes in the organization of Jewish religious communities, issued by Piłsudski on February 7, 1919, the competences of the Jewish communities were strictly limited to religious functions with some minor exceptions for social welfare.¹²⁴ After the May coup, however, many Jewish politicians saw the chance to renegotiate the communities' status. The IBSN must have seemed quite a promising avenue to prepare for this campaign. Two members of the Jewish Commission of the IBSN, Aleksander Hafftko and Samuel Adalberg,¹²⁵ would indeed be directly involved in the preparation of laws in the field as those responsible for Jewish affairs in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and in the Ministry of Religion and Education.¹²⁶ The close ties of the institute to several influential politicians and to the administration raised the hope that the IBSN would be the right forum to begin negotiations on the community issue.

However, despite these incipient informal discussions at the institute involving Jewish leaders of various political backgrounds and state officials, the government already in fall 1927 decided to introduce legal regulations for the

121 Gershon C. Bacon, *Politics of Tradition. Agudat Yisroel in Poland 1916–1939* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996), 178–224.

122 Źyndul, *Państwo w Państwie?*, 106–122.

123 Ibid., 109–114.

124 The decree is printed in: Józef Dawidsohn, *Gminy Żydowskie (z tekstami ustaw i rozporządzeń)* (Warszawa: Klub Posłów Sejmowych Żydowskiej Rady Narodowej, 1931), 53–55.

125 Samuel Adalberg (1868–1939), Polish state official and Jewish folklorist, advocate of Jewish assimilation, 1918–1930 referent for questions of Mosaic confession and later head of the section for Mosaic confession in the MWRIOP. *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, s.v. »Samuel Adalberg,« <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org> (accessed August 1, 2014).

126 »Z Instytutu Badań Spraw Narodowościowych,« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 1, no. 1 (1927): 87–89, here 88.

communities without any further consultations or even awaiting the results of the survey undertaken by the IBSN. In October 1927, President Ignacy Mościcki and Gustaw Dobrucki, the Minister for Religion and Public Education, issued several decrees based on Piłsudski's decree of 1919 that extended the legal basis for Jewish communities to the eastern territories of Poland, while adjusting it in former Galicia to reduce the differences between the various regions.¹²⁷ It also contained minor modifications, and granted the communities the status of organizations under public law. The restrictions mainly limiting these community activities to religious functions would, however, remain unchanged.¹²⁸

Why did the government decide to end the consultations with Jewish experts and politicians, issuing legislation affecting the Jewish communities without their consent instead? With no documentation available, one can only guess what the reasons were. The most probable explanation is that the government officials present at the debates on the Jewish communities in the IBSN's Jewish section – Hafftka and Adalberg – noticed a lack of will among the Jewish leadership to find a compromise on that issue. This unwillingness was not so much meant in relation to the government as it was within Jewish society itself. There was no end in sight to the ongoing power struggles or to the debate over whether the communities should be religious or secular institutions and not much in fact changed until the beginning of World War II.¹²⁹ Under these circumstances the government's support for either side in this internal Jewish conflict would have worsened their relations with the other. And in this context, the government decided to only solve the most urgent problems by basically extending the status quo in the former Kingdom of Poland to the rest of the country. This did not place one particular side in a favorable position, but improved the situation of a vast part of the Jewish population, especially in the eastern parts of the country.

Jewish society reacted to these regulations with various degrees of disappointment.¹³⁰ This feeling was addressed by Izaak Bornstein,¹³¹ a Jewish statistician who had been in charge of the IBSN's survey on the communities, who

127 Żyndul, *Państwo w Państwie?*, 178–224.

128 Dawidsohn, *Gminy Żydowskie*, 56 f.

129 Bacon, *Politics of Tradition*, 128.

130 While for instance the Lemberg Zionist Ignacy Schwarzbart considered at least the »smaller half« of their demands fulfilled (*Chwila*, April 25, 1928), his fellow Zionist Wolf Schmorak (*Chwila*, May 8, 1928) regarded the new law as an absolute obstacle to the successful functioning of the communities.

131 Izaak Bornstein (1895–1943), economist and statistic, from 1926 secretary of the JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Comitee) Office in Poland, Co-founder of the CEKABE (Centralna Kasa Bezprocentowy), the Central Organisations of Jewish Free Loan Banks. *Yidisher Gezelshaftlekher Leksikon*, s.v. »Izaak Bornstein.«

presented his findings on November 8, 1928 during a session of the institute's Jewish Commission. During the following discussion it was Adalberg who suggested the publication of the report.¹³² It appeared in number 6/1928 of *Sprawy Narodowościowe*. At the beginning Bornstein stated that:

the law on Jewish communities issued on the basis of the presidential decree of October 14, 1927 (amended March 6, 1928), was criticized by the Jewish public, which demanded a community that would cover a broad field of educational and social activities while, at the same time, serving as a nucleus of national autonomy, and not – as it is at present – be restricted only to meeting the religious needs of certain parts of the Jewish population.¹³³

He therefore expressed quite openly the dissatisfaction of the Jews with the current situation as well as their expectations that a new law would grant the communities broader competences with regard to social and cultural work. In his analysis, however, he stressed that many of the existing Jewish communities were already engaged in social and cultural activities that went far beyond a narrow understanding of religious functions. His data demonstrated that Jewish communities with more than 5,000 members had been spending about one third of their budgets on social and educational efforts.¹³⁴ This showed that despite the letter of the law, Jewish communities were actually active in much broader spheres of endeavor.

In another article on that issue in the official *Kwartalnik Statystyczny* (Statistical Quarterly), Bornstein went even further and declared that, contrary to the official restrictions on secular purposes, the communities were acting as de facto Jewish national self-governing bodies. As he argued, this was due to their newly acquired status as institutions under public law:

The Jewish community is thus not only a philanthropic institution, which distributes certain funds among the poor of their place. It is also an autonomous body of this nationality to meet its cultural and social needs and even has the right to impose obligatory taxation on its members [...].¹³⁵

132 »Z Instytutu Badań Spraw Narodowościowych,« *Sprawy Narodowościowe* 2, no. 5 (1928): 621–623, here 623.

133 »Ustawa o gminach wyznaniowych żydowskich, wydana na podstawie rozporządzenia Prezydenta z dnia 14 października 1927 r. (znowelizowana dnia 6 marca 1928 r.) spotyka się z krytyką opinii żydowskiej, która domaga się gminy, któraby miała szeroki zakres działania w żydowskich sprawach oświatowych i społecznych i mogła być temsamem zaczątkiem autonomii narodowej, a nie ograniczała się – jak jest obecnie – do zaspokajania tylko potrzeb religijnych pewnej części ludności żydowskiej.« Bornstein, »O działalności żydowskich gmin wyznaniowych,« 708.

134 *Ibid.*, 714.

135 »Gmina żydowska bowiem nie jest tylko instytucją filantropijną, zajmującą się podziałem pewnych funduszy wśród ubogich swej miejscowości; jest ona

Bornstein's assumption was not completely wrong. Especially the right to tax its members granted the Jewish communities a stable financial basis and the means to fund cultural and social activities. Still, his assumptions were generally far too optimistic. The reason why the communities could act as they did and expand their legal boundaries was mainly due to the fact that the state bureaucracy, and the Ministry of Religion and Education in particular, which was charged with the supervision of the communities, turned a blind eye to their practices. There was no guarantee, however, that this would remain as it was in the late 1920s. In 1930 – the year when Adalberg retired – the Ministry of Religion and Education already decided to implement a bill on new voting regulations for the communities. The decree strengthened the religious character of the Jewish communities, by dint of introducing a rule that allowed community boards to remove voters from the electoral rolls if they were accused of taking a public stand against the Jewish religion.¹³⁶

This regulation was often interpreted as a favor to the Orthodox party *Agudas Yisroel* to reward it for its support of the Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government (*Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem*)¹³⁷ in the 1928 and 1930 elections. The regulation enabled *Agudas Yisroel* to strengthen its power in community elections by deleting large numbers of especially secular Jewish voters from the communities' electoral rolls.¹³⁸

Soon after that, the supervision of the Jewish communities by the Ministry of Religion and Education and its counterparts in the voivode administration strengthened its control over the communities, and it criticized any large expenditures made on tasks not related to religion. This development along with the community board election regulations provoked continual critique from Jewish politicians and social activists. Even in the two-volume collection

jednocześnie organem autonomii tej narodowości na polu zaspokojenia jej potrzeb kulturalnych i społecznych, działając z prawem przymusowego opodatkowania ludności [...].» Izaak Bornstein, »Budżety gmin wyznaniowych żydowskich w Polsce,« *Kwartalnik Statystyczny* 6, no. 3 (1929): 1361–1391, here 1361.

136 The decree is printed in: Dawidsohn, *Gminy Żydowskie*, 69–87. The regulation to remove voters from the electoral rolls is to be found in § 20.

137 The Nonpartisan Bloc for Cooperation with the Government was formed prior to the elections of 1928 as the party of the Piłsudski camp. On the Bloc, see Chojnowski, *Piłsudczycy u władzy*.

138 Żyndul, *Państwo w Państwie?*, 116–118. This regulation seemed to have been abused quite often, especially in smaller communities, as can be seen from an interpellation of Sejm deputy Icchak Grünbaum on March 11, 1931. In it, he mentions cases, when for example a person has been removed under the § 20 rule for »reading a newspaper on the Sabbath with an uncovered head at home« or »talking to a girl.« The text of the interpellation is printed in: Dawidsohn, *Gminy Żydowskie*, 108–110; the examples are given on page 109.

Jews in Reborn Poland, published in 1932 and 1933, which was meant to underline the positive attitude of Jews towards Poland, the chapter on »Legislation concerning the Jewish communities in Reborn Poland« was strongly critical.¹³⁹

Conclusion

In the course of the 1920s, the IBSN, at first a private initiative of scholars and politicians considered to be experts on minority questions, developed into a semi-governmental think tank. It therefore exchanged its independence for better material conditions and direct access to decision-making state agencies. It served not only as a provider of policy advice but also as an intermediary between the representatives of the minorities, Polish politicians, and the state administration. The institute thus had considerable influence on the development of minority policies in Poland during the late 1920s. However, this does not mean that the IBSN had the power to decide on the general direction of these policies, even as it did provide input into the debates of the time. Thanks to its large network, which included the intellectual and political elites of the minorities, the institute was able to contribute information to these debates, which would probably not have otherwise been accessible to the state administration. Even more, it served as a forum in which minority representatives, Polish politicians, and state officials could exchange their ideas in an informal atmosphere and without being widely visible to the press or political opponents.

As the example of the Orthodox Church shows, such activities could have a considerable impact on law-making and the political process. However, it also indicates that the success of the intermediaries always depended on the attitudes of the people involved in the process. Whenever the ministerial staff changed – quite a common event during this period – relations between the institute, the respective minority representatives, and the decision-makers were thrown out of balance and had to be reconfigured.

The debates on the Jewish communities, in turn, clearly delineated the limits of the policy advisement process. Without the political will to find a common position among Jewish politicians, it was impossible to convince the government to change the status quo, if only since no clear alternative was being put forward. Still, the government had not been eager to introduce major changes in the first place, and used the disagreement among Jewish politicians to cement this position. The government did not see any political benefit to be gained by

¹³⁹ Michał Ringel, »Ustawodawstwo Polski Odrodzonej o gminach żydowskich« in *Żydzi w Polsce Odrodzonej*, vol. 2, eds. Aleksander Hafftka, Ignacy Schiper and Arje Tartakower (Warszawa; Żydzi w Polsce Odrodzonej, 1933), 242–248.

granting the Jewish communities broader autonomy with the risk of becoming embroiled in an inner-Jewish conflict. Their broader ability to act in practical terms instead reflected the good will of the particular official in charge and could change when he left office. The Orthodox Church was regarded as instrumental with regard to the Ukrainian and Belarusian populations of the eastern borderlands, who were to be tied closer to the state. The support of the Ukrainianization movement by the state was considered – at least by some officials – to be a step towards strengthening the loyalty of the Ukrainian population to the state. The relations between the Jewish population and the state were clearly not viewed as particularly critical by the officials in charge, who therefore did not see a need to change the status quo.

This in turn shows that the nationality policies of the Piłsudski camp, despite any great hopes for improvements in the new state for the non-Polish population in Poland, were not aimed at finding a single suitable system for all its citizens without regard to their nationality. Steps were only taken in cases in which it would serve short-term political interests – and even then they were taken very cautiously. Institutions like the IBSN, by contrast, depended on the official will to reform in order to work successfully.

Stephan Stach

