

At the End of the Road

The Ethnic Identity of the Former Jewish Communists of Poland

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This article presents some of the results of a broader project,¹ the aim of which is to analyse the history and identity changes of a particular ethnopolitical generation—the former Jewish communists of Poland. In this paper I will briefly outline the background to the ethnic identity of the generation and analyse its current state.

There is an important distinction to be made between the concepts of generation and group as used in this paper. While "generation" denominates an analytical concept, the term "group" describes a concrete subsection of the generation, an entity on the empirical level.

The analysis of the present state of the ethnic identity² of the generation proves the changing, dynamic structure of ethnic identity and shows the mechanisms and factors that shape and reshape it. It also sheds additional light on the connections between the social predicament of ethnic groups, their identity and strategies of emancipation.

The analysis will be guided by the following questions: What are the repercussions of the group's social and political experiences on its ethnic identity? What is the nature of changes that have taken place in its ethnic identity? What is the present state of the ethnic identity of the group? Which subidentities does it consist of? What is the content of these subidentities and how do they interact with each other? What is the nature of the

group member's sense of ethnic community? Which factors have influenced and shaped it?

The concept of Jewish identity, which is central in this context, follows that used by Simon N. Herman,³ the purpose of whose research from the outset was to inspire worldwide study of Jewish identity today.

1. The generation

The members of the group were born between 1900 and 1920; the youngest are now approaching their seventies and the oldest are close to ninety years old. They came from Poland to Sweden as stateless persons during the period 1969–72⁴ and were granted the status of political refugees. In a uniquely concentrated form, their lives reflect the drama of Europe's modern political history in general, and that of Central Eastern Europe in particular, with its ethnic conflicts, social unrests and political changes.

They began their active lives in Poland between the World Wars; they survived the Second World War as refugees in the Soviet Union;⁵ after the war they rebuilt their lives in Poland; during the years 1969–72 they again started a new life, in Sweden. Considering that it has had to start a new life in three different countries and at four different times, this

generation is unique. In the course of their lives, the members of the generation were citizens and refugees, conspirators and public figures, outsiders and leaders, active subjects in the making of history and its powerless objects. Each of the life stories of the group's members is unique. Taken together, they are representative of the social, political and ideological history of the times and societies in which they were active.

The members of the group constitute a generation in more than merely a demographic sense. They are all Jews, mostly from traditional homes. They all revolted both against the ghetto world of their parents and against the burden of anti-Semitism, and they did it in a similar way. Although many later attempted to change their Jewish identity by opting for a Polish one, their Jewishness played a decisive part in their lives; thus, they constitute a part of the total Jewish experience and are an ethnically defined generation.

They all joined the communist movement in Poland before the Second World War and, despite fears and doubts, remained faithful to the communist ideas (which many of their peers did not), until their forced exodus from Poland. Almost all of them spent long years in prison for their communist activities before the outbreak of the Second World War (the communist movement was outlawed in Poland) and they survived the war in similar conditions in Soviet Union. They all enthusiastically accepted (and many of them actively participated in) the communist takeover of power in Poland after the Second World War. In the years until their exodus from Poland they all—shoemakers and high officials alike—remained members of the now exclusively dominant Communist Party (although many with a growing sense of disappointment and moral bankruptcy). They all participated in the same existential defeat when they were forced, or felt forced, to leave Poland in the aftermath of the so-called March events of 1968.

Their lives were shaped by the same ideologies, politics and ethnicity and marked by the same winds of historical change; they thus constitute a generation in the Mannheimian sense of the word:⁶

Whereas mere common "location" in a generation is of only potential significance, a generation as an actuality is constituted when similarly "located" contemporaries participate in a common destiny and in the ideas and concepts which are in some way bound up with its unfolding. Within this community of people with a common destiny, there can then arise particular generation-units. These are characterized by the fact that they do not merely involve a loose participation by a number of individuals in a pattern of events shared by all alike though interpreted by different individuals differently, but an identity of responses, a certain affinity in the way in which all move with and are formed by their common experiences.

Having its deepest foundations in both ethnic and political factors, this generation should be regarded as an ethnopolitical one; and its identity, shaped by both ethnic and political elements, as an ethnopolitical identity.

2. The identity of the generation: background and points of departure

They believed in rationality and in a determined history, in which all stages of development lead to an ultimate, scientifically predictable end. Being the victims of ethnic stigma and most often belonging to the class of have-nots, they were doubly oppressed. With the deepening economic crisis and increasing anti-Semitism in Poland in the 1930s,⁷ the seriousness of their situation became more and more apparent. In fact, in their recollections, the expression "generation without hope" is frequently used. The sense of oppression and hopelessness against the backdrop of ever worsening economic and political conditions of Polish Jewry, contributed to the formation of this generation's general outlook on the world, an outlook which would govern most of its members' active lives.

Because in their view the development of society was scientifically predictable and deter-

mined, they believed that the process could be speeded up. At the end of the history was the Millennium; a society of equals without class or national oppression, a society which the great Polish poet of Jewish origin, Julian Tuwim, yearned for in these words:

"Daj robotnikom we wladanie
owoce pracy we wsiach i w miastach
bankierow rozpedz -
i spraw Panie
by pieniadz w pieniadz nie porastal
Pysznych pokora niechaj uzbroj
pokornym gniewnej dumy przydaj
i naucz nas ze pod sloncem Twoim
nie masz Greczyna ani Zyda"

(Leave in the worker's care and power/
the fruits of work in town and country/
disperse the bankers/
let not money breed money, Lord/
for rich and mighty/
Let proud and vain/
show humble spirit/
and give to humble pride and anger/
show us that under the sun of yours/
be neither Greek nor Jew)

Such was the society which was bound to become a reality, making all the human race a family and opening a new era of fulfillment and happiness for all. This society was the ultimate end of history, whose iron laws now replaced God.

Speeding up the progress of human development, was seen by the members of the generation as the sacred duty of the enlightened revolutionary élite, a duty that had to be performed for the good of everybody. The conviction of the meaning and the orientation of history, and the belief in the duty of the revolutionary avant-garde to speed up its pace, lead to a contempt for the common man's common sense and for democracy. The generation became soldiers of history marching under the banner of revolutionary messianism.⁸

The members of the generation have their roots in the Jewish milieu of Poland between the World Wars. Poland was a multinational state with 35 million inhabitants (1939), of whom 35% were minorities.⁹ The Jews constituted 9.8% of the population; only in USA were

there more Jews during this particular period. While Polish society could still be characterized as rural—only 27% of the Polish, 7% of the Ukrainian and 3% of the White Russian population lived in the cities—the Jews were predominantly urban, with 76% living in the cities. There were many small cities whose populations were almost entirely Jewish, and in many other towns the Jews formed a majority. 40% of the Polish Jewry lived in towns with a Jewish population of at least 10,000. While the Jews constituted 9.8% of Poland's total population, they formed over 25% of the inhabitants of the cities and towns of Poland; only 3% of Polish Jews lived in the countryside.¹⁰

A majority of the members of this generation came from traditional Jewish homes. They were thus brought up with the norms of conduct and the values of this milieu. But the harmony of childhood and early youth did not last long. Growing class and political tensions in Polish society, as well as growing anti-Semitism, which after the death of Marshal Pilsudski in 1935 gradually became adopted by the authoritarian so-called Colonels' regime as its official policy,¹¹ resulted in an increasing pauperization of the Jewish population. As the sense of hopelessness grew, so did the generation gap. The younger generation became more secular and radical; political tensions and ideological debates could cut across every Jewish family.¹²

Polish Jewry did not form a homogeneous group. Politically, it was splintered into competing parties and ideologies. There were socio-economic divisions and, as secularization grew stronger, divisions in respect to assimilation and traditionalism.¹³ There was a wide variety of Jewish newspapers, theatres, books, schools and cultural institutions¹⁴ connected to different political parties and ideologies. In all this diversity Jewish culture bloomed.

But the situation of the Polish Jewry was that of a stigmatized caste.¹⁵ All the competing Jewish parties¹⁶ and movements were faced with the same basic question: how could Polish Jewry's impossible caste situation be solved?

To this question four different answers, or four different strategies of emancipation were proposed: the Bundist, the Zionist, the orthodox and the communist one.

The three major competing political forces of the so-called *ulica zydowska* (Jewish street) of that period, were the Algemayner Yiddisher Arbeter Bund (The General Jewish Workers' Union), in short: the Bund, the Zionist movement with a whole variety of parties, ranging from extreme left (e.g. Poaley Zion Left) to right (the Revisionists), and the parties of the traditional and orthodox part of the Jewish community, among which Agudas Yisroel (Aguda) was the strongest.

Most Jewish workers supported the Bund. The Bund was a radical social democratic party that worked for a just socialist society, as well as for Jewish cultural autonomy. According to the Bund, Polish Jewry could and should be emancipated in a future socialist and multi-ethnic Polish state. The language of the Bund was Yiddish. The Bund built up a network of trade unions, cultural clubs, social institutions and organizations. It was a mass movement, working for an alliance of all the socialist parties in Poland and strongly opposed to Zionism as both reactionary and unrealistic. Despite, or maybe because of its radicalism, shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, the Bund became the largest Jewish party in Poland.

The other major component was the Zionist movement. It has been estimated that approximately 40% of Polish Jewry supported the Zionist parties. According to the movement, the Jews could only be emancipated in a state of their own. Establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was the movement's ultimate goal. The movement built up a network of Hebrew schools, clubs and youth organizations. It worked for the revival of Hebrew culture and language, and offered agricultural and other occupational training as preparation for mass emigration to Palestine.

It is understood that both the Zionist and the Bundist movements represented, each in its own way, a rebellion against conditions of traditional Jewish ghetto life, a struggle against anti-Semitism and for Jewish emancipation.

As the overall goal of the Zionist movement was the mass emigration of Polish Jews to Palestine, an aim wholeheartedly supported by the Polish authorities, the movement's non-

socialist segments enjoyed relatively good relations with, and support from the Polish government.

About a third of the adult Jewish population in Poland was traditional or orthodox. Their main political party was the Agudat Israel, in short: Aguda. Faced with the challenges of modern times, the orthodox block aimed at the perpetuation of the traditional, isolated Jewish community and orthodox Jewish identity, as well as the prevention of the growing secularization of the Jewish masses. The Aguda also had a large network of schools. It acted mainly within the framework of Jewish Congregations. It was antisocialist and opposed to Zionism. Through deals and agreements with the representatives of the Polish authorities, the Aguda was able to exercise a great deal of influence.

Compared to these political forces, Jewish communists were few. The Polish communist movement¹⁷ was relatively small. There was no separate Jewish communist party in Poland (although at times, there was a separate Jewish section—C.J.B.—of the Polish Communist Party). The most radical of all the Jewish radicals in Poland at that time, the Jewish communists participated in the Polish communist movement, with its three parties: CPP (the Communist Party of Poland), CPZU (the Communist Party of Western Ukraine), and CPZD (the Communist Party of Western White Russia). Each of these parties had its own youth organizations. The communist movement was outlawed, and to participate in it meant the risk of a severe prison sentence. The communist movement was numerically small and did not strive after mass membership. Although different sources present slightly different numbers for different periods, we know that in 1933 the CPP had 9,200 members, CPZU 4,600 and CPZB 4,000. The movement worked underground and it regarded its cadres as a revolutionary avantgarde that would spearhead a radical upheaval of the existing society. It worked in close alliance with the international communist movement, guided by the Comintern from Moscow.

The Jews constituted a substantial part of the Polish communist movement. Approxi-

mately a quarter of the members of CPP were Jewish and the proportion of Jewish members was at least as high in CPZU and CPZB; it has been estimated that there were, in total, at least 5,000 organized Jewish party members before 1935. Moreover, the Jews constituted 54% of the CPP's field workers and 75% of its *technika* (the cadre entrusted with production and distribution of the propaganda materials). In the party's youth movement, the Jews constituted between 30% and 50% of the members.¹⁸ As it is highly probable that the Jewish membership in the movement grew even more after 1933, when a younger, desperate generation joined the youth organizations of the movement en masse, it is safe to assume that the Jewish communists made a decisive impression on the communist movement in Poland at the time.

In the view of the Jewish communists, the Jewish masses, as well as all other oppressed minorities, could only be emancipated through a revolutionary upheaval that would lead to a radically new, communist society, free from both class and ethnic oppression. Some of the Jewish communists, particularly those from the intelligentsia, believed that once the Jews were emancipated, the progressive solution was to assimilate and become either Poles or members of a cosmopolitan society of the communist future. Their enthusiasm, devotion and high level of education, accounts for their rise to the leadership of the movement. Let us in I. Deutscher's words call them the "non-Jewish Jews".

Another, larger group, consisted of the "Jewish Jews". They were poor and their native language was Yiddish. They, too, tried to escape from the stigma of being Jewish and from the situation of being outcasts, but they believed fully in the officially proclaimed Soviet policy of just treatment for national minorities. If the "non-Jewish Jews" saw the future of the communist society as a mankind of individuals, the "Jewish Jews" saw it as a family of nations.

It is important to stress that only about 5% of the Polish Jewry supported the communists.¹⁹ The Jewish community in Poland was thus far from being committed to communism;

on the other hand the communist movement was to a large degree composed of Jews.

After the socialization of childhood and early youth, the period of activities in the communist movement until the dissolution of the CPP in 1938 was a decisive period in the formation of the ethnopolitical identity of this generation. In underground illegal activities, in small, secret party cells that demanded unlimited devotion and discipline, in prison, in religiously intensive debates, in studies of the classics of Marxism-Leninism, in a situation of being outsiders in two ways—both with regard to the Jewish community and to the Polish society in general—the identity of the members of the generation was reshaped. The purely ideological communist view of the world was refiltered through, and mixed with, the group's Jewish cultural and spiritual background. As children, the members of the generation received their religious education in *chedarim* (Jewish religious primary schools). They grew up mostly in the traditional homes of their parents and grandparents, in *shtetlachs* (small Jewish towns) or in predominantly Jewish neighbourhoods of the larger towns. They read Jewish papers and books. They played, studied and worked with other Jews. Although often marginal, they were part and parcel of the world of Polish Jewry which on the eve of the Holocaust numbered 3,500,000 people and was, as already noted, ideologically rich and diversified.

In the formation of the generation's identity, the ethnic and the political elements became one. A typical member of the group was not only a Jew and not only a communist, but a special type of communist and a special type of Jew. He was a Polish Jewish communist.

Later, other stages followed in the history and in the evolution of the ethnopolitical identity of the generation; the years as refugees in the Soviet Union during the war, where the generation's vision of the fatherland of the international proletariat in many cases met the reality of Siberian labour camps and steppes of Kazakhstan; the triumphant return to Poland and the communist takeover; the first enthusiastic years of building the foundations of a society they had dreamed of (but even of police

terror and fears for one's safety); the shock of Khrushchev's disclosures about the extent and nature of crimes in the Stalinist era; a short period of new hopes for a better socialism after 1956, and a growing sense of disillusionment and opportunism of the coming years, when the generation tried to keep what was left of the dreams of its youth, although many of their peers had already abandoned the vision.

Finally came the existential defeat at the end of the 1960s, when the ethnic stigma of the generation caught up with it again.

They were Jewish by birth, Polish by citizenship and conscious choice. Today they are citizens of Sweden. These three subidentities: Jewish, Polish and Swedish, interacting with each other, create, together with the political identity of the generation, the totality of its ethnopolitical identity.

The ethnopolitical identity of the generation is a whole; it appears and functions as such in the reality of social life. To break it up into separate components, an ethnic and a political one is analytically productive, but one must never forget that the separation of subidentities is just an analytical tool and not a social reality. Keeping this in mind, let us now describe the present state of the ethnic subidentity²⁰ of the generation, leaving its political subidentity aside as much as possible.

3. Language

Polish, Yiddish and Swedish are the languages used by the group today. When they came to Sweden, the members of this group were already relatively old. Despite intensive study, their command of Swedish is not as good as their command of Polish or Yiddish.

The members of the group communicate with their neighbours in Swedish (though the intensity of such contacts is low) and, before they reached the age of retirement, at work. Swedish is also used in contacts with Swedish authorities, in some limited spheres of daily life (shopping etc.), and even in the consumption

of information and culture, mainly in the form of Swedish newspapers, books and TV. Their passive command of Swedish is generally quite good and much better than their active one.

As some of their grandchildren speak only Swedish, part of the group uses this language also in contacts between generations within the framework of a larger family.

Polish means not only the language of an active past. For a large majority of the group, Polish is still the main living language, used in communicating with one's children—most of the children do not speak Yiddish—in writing letters, speaking to friends, reading etc. Polish is thus still a language of interpersonal communications, of thinking and of cultural consumption.

Yiddish is the language of youth, the language used to communicate with parents (almost exclusively) and peers (alternating with Polish), the importance of which in the years from 1945 to 1969 was consciously played down in favour of Polish. As a rule, although there are exceptions, the members of the group did not teach or speak Yiddish to their children. Often neglected before (*"we spoke Yiddish at home when we did not want our children to understand"*) or used in parallel with Polish, but only in certain situations and in contact with certain people (*"One spoke Yiddish to people who worked in the Jewish sector or to those about whom one knew that they had nothing against speaking Yiddish, of course not in a coffee shop or in a restaurant. . ."*), Yiddish has now become respectable again. In spite of the fact that there is a consciousness that Yiddish is a disappearing language (*"When we die, nobody will speak Yiddish anymore"*), it is still used and there is a status and pride attached to using it. Yiddish is undergoing a revival and is being used (alternating with Polish) for communication with wife or husband, with peers, in reading newspapers and books. Yiddish is also used as a lingua franca when abroad, for making contact with other Jews.

To sum up: Polish and Yiddish are the living languages of the group, used for active communication and for consumption of information and culture. Swedish is the language of secondary social contacts, of contacts with

authorities and of passive consumption of information and culture.

4. Self-identification and the content of subidentities

How does the group identify itself? What is the content of its Jewish, Polish and Swedish subidentities?

The language factor, together with the political and social history of the generation, creates the background to the question of self-identification and identity in which all the three subidentities exist, playing different roles. When asked direct questions about their self-identification, the members of the group most often describe themselves as "Jews" and later as "Polish Jews in Sweden". They define the Jews as a nation and the Diaspora Jews as national minorities. In their daily life in Sweden, they feel that they are generally not perceived as Jews, but rather as belonging to the general category of *utlänningar* (foreigners). Abroad they generally present themselves as Swedes; to a fellow Jew, however, they would present themselves as Polish Jews from Sweden—a direct reflection and proof of the sincerity of their basic self-identification.

It must also be mentioned that within the generation there is also a small but distinct minority that plays down its Jewishness. This minority defines itself as "Poles of Jewish origin", a distinction that goes back to the end of the 19th century and the interwar period in Poland, when part of the assimilated Jewish intelligentsia fought for recognition as Poles,²¹ and to the period after 1945 when this was the officially recognized definition of Polish Jews.

Characteristically enough, most of those who identify themselves as Poles of Jewish origin have their roots in such assimilated families. Another characteristic is that most have intermarried (which also many of the "Jews" or "Polish Jews in Sweden" have done). Whether such intermarriages are to be seen as the reason for, or the result of, this identificational attitude is quite another question.

Before proceeding with the analysis of the interaction between the subidentities, let us again underline the fact that in the group's spontaneous self-definition, the Jewish, Polish and Swedish elements are amalgamated into a unity, which in the perception of the generation adequately reflects the existential conditions of its life.

The Swedishness of the group is primarily perceived as citizen's rights and obligations towards the Swedish state, its society and its laws. Although there often is a feeling of not being able to influence the society and its politics ("*... we are old and few, nobody takes any notice of us...* "), there is a general appreciation of being able to live in Sweden's democratic society.

However, the Swedishness of the group has little or no ethnic content in terms of customs and traditions, and commands little involvement of feelings (except in questions of internal party politics and the international politics of the Swedish government). Moreover, the ethnic and cultural distinctiveness of Swedish society is perceived as limited, which is, perhaps paradoxically, appreciated by the group ("*in fact, they [the ethnic Swedes -J.S.] have not many customs or traditions that they keep alive. If they would, maybe it would have been more difficult for us, for all the utlänningar [foreigners - J.S.] here*").

The following remark sums up the content of the Swedishness of the group: "*If I am Swedish? Yes, I am Swedish in the sense of citizenship. I am a Swedish citizen, and I appreciate that. I pay taxes, I vote in elections, I am a loyal member of the society. But if you mean to ask if I dance around the pole at Midsummer—no, it would be ridiculous, it has no meaning to me.*"

Thus, we can conclude that the Swedish subidentity, having no ethnic content to speak of, creates a civil framework for, and a stage upon which, the group's ethnicity can act.

The Polishness of the generation is a much more complicated phenomenon. The active political and social past of the members of the group is in Poland—most of their recollections of work and leisure, worries and joys, successes and failures, are placed in the Polish past. As

mentioned before, Polish is still a living language of the group, and Polish culture part of its heritage.

But the Polishness of this group never existed alone—it always had to co-exist with its Jewishness. In the past, this combination of subidentities could be experienced by the group as more or less harmonious, but there always existed a psychological readiness or an expectation that the mixture could be perceived by the non-Jewish Poles as unacceptable. Those who opted for an exclusively Polish identity could do so only by minimizing or by hiding their Jewish past, otherwise they faced the risk of rejection. In Poland the group experienced an existential defeat when it was made the scapegoat for the mistakes of others. It was stigmatized and then forced to leave the country. This existential defeat is understood as a final truth, as the moment when the life-long dreams and illusions of the generation were crushed and vanished. The defeat resulted in a slow reconstruction of the values, attitudes and identity of the generation—but it still causes great pain. When asked if they still regard themselves as Poles, or as Poles in exile, a great majority answer that they do not. However, it is important to note that this rejection of Polish self-definition, is almost always connected to, and motivated by, an earlier rejection of the group's Polish identificational aspirations. *"I was a Pole, a Polish Jew. It took me a long time to realize that I was not wanted there. Today, I am not a Pole any longer and I do not want to be one. They did not want us, and now we do not want them"*. This is confirmed by the fact that the majority of the group does not seek and has little contact with the non-Jewish Poles in Sweden.

However, despite declarations to the contrary, in the course of the interviews it soon became clear that a Polish subidentity still exists; it exists, though, as an open wound, and as a source of pain at having been rejected, which is still not fully accepted.

The Jewishness of the group is generally described in terms of being members of the Jewish nation, (in the Diaspora: of being members of a Jewish national minority), of sharing the same Jewish fate, of Jewish interdepen-

dence, of looking at the world through one's "Jewish eyes". The Jewishness of the generation is not understood in terms of religion—most of the members of the group are still more or less radically anti-religious, and have a materialistic view of the world. Judaism, however, is perceived not only as a religion, which the group rejects, but also as a collective memory, a description of Jewish history and as ethical postulates of the Jewish People. In this respect, Judaism is held in esteem and its contribution to the ethics of western civilization is regarded with special pride.

To summarize: the generally held self-identification of the group, "Polish Jews in Sweden", consists of three parts: Swedish, Polish and Jewish.

The Swedish subidentity is perceived in the categories of citizen's rights and duties and other legal framework.

The Polish subidentity is defined as the group's past in which most of its active life took place and in which a substantial part of the core of being, thinking and communicating was formed. The Polish subidentity is still active, although with diminished strength.

The Jewish subidentity, with the group's conviction of participating in the same fate and of being interdependent, occupies a special position, but more about this later.

5. The interrelatedness of subidentities

Bearing in mind what has been said, let us examine the interrelatedness between the Jewish, Polish and Swedish subidentities. In what way are they related and how do they influence each other? Do they overlap? Are they consonant or competitive? What is their attractiveness? Which one is central?

Let us start by analyzing the interrelatedness of the Swedish subidentity on one hand, and the Jewish and Polish subidentities on the other. In view of the group, the Swedish and the Jewish/Polish subidentities are not inter-related. Since Swedishness mainly means a legal framework and a citizen's rights and du-

ties, without the deeper emotional connotations of custom and tradition, and since Jewishness/Polishness creates the core of ethnicity (the language of intimate communication and thinking, the relatedness to one's personal and the whole group's active history, traditions and customs, values and attitudes), there is no overlap. There is no connection between feeling Swedish or Jewish/Polish. Instead, there are clear boundaries between these identities: *"I am from Poland, I lived there, I worked there, I spoke Polish to my children, I was a Pole. And I was a Jew too. My whole family died in the Holocaust. The whole Jewish history is in me. Now I am a Swede, pay the taxes, obey the law. This has nothing in common. To be a Swedish citizen is one thing and to be a Jew or a Pole another"*.

These two pairs of subidentities are neither consonant nor dissonant—feeling more Swedish does not imply feeling more or less Jewish/Polish. The subidentities are not competitive—they create separate, but non-conflicting compartments in the lives of the members of the group.

This relationship, or the lack of it, is perceived as a desirable characteristic of a multiethnic society: *"Today in Sweden one can be Iranian, Finnish or Jewish. It does not matter, as long as one is a good citizen. I think that it is very good"*. (However, there is an awareness of the theoretical possibility of conflict between the subidentities. One respondent said: *"Suppose that Sweden would become virulently anti-Israeli. Or suppose that Sweden would support anti-Semitism somewhere... Then there would be a problem... If something like that would occur, one would be ashamed to admit that one is from Sweden"*).

The relationship between the Jewish and the Polish subidentity is much more complicated. The generation's Jewishness and Polishness are much more ethnic; they both have to do with language, internalized history, tradition, custom, values and attitudes. They are interrelated, and apparently in a painful way.

In the past, the generation opted for an identity with a strong Polish component: a majority for a Polish-Jewish, a minority for an exclusively Polish. Neither of these identifica-

tional aspirations was accepted, and the group left Poland feeling a sense of existential defeat. One of the results of this situation is the deeply felt conviction of a lifelong self-deception: *"We cheated ourselves our whole lives. We were never wanted"*.

After the initial chaos of identification during the first years in Sweden, a new balance of subidentities had to be established. The vacuum created by the lessening of the Polish subidentity was filled with a growing Jewish subidentity. The group today is much more Jewish than it was in Poland and it is conscious of this change.

Here it is interesting to note that this opinion was mostly voiced when the respondents were asked about other Jews from Poland, their colleagues and friends (*"In Poland many pretended that they were not Jewish, but today they are not afraid to be Jewish. Almost all have now returned to their Jewishness"*), maintaining simultaneously that they are now as Jewish as they were before. These two different statements are only seemingly contradictory; together they prove the increased attractiveness of being Jewish, which here expresses itself in showing one's identificational steadiness as compared to others'.

Today there is a clear conflict in the choice of identifying oneself as Jewish or Polish. The Jewish and the Polish subidentities are, however, not separate compartments with clear boundaries between them. Although the subidentities are seen as dissonant—the more Polish you are, the less Jewish you are, and vice versa—they are apparently interwoven. They appear as a mixture, as a oneness. But where they were once seen as complementary, they are now perceived as competing.

As already mentioned, beneath the surface of conscious self-identification, there is the apparent pain of having been rejected. The group has chosen to play down its Polish subidentity. However, even if unwanted, it is still there, and plays its painful game of balance with the Jewish side. Sometimes, this is clearly understood and verbalized: *"One should not cheat oneself. Even if I wanted to, I cannot erase the Polishness in me. It might be different with our children, but with us... We can not change"*.

The subgroup "Poles of Jewish origin" declares a non-conflicting wholeness to their Polishness and Jewishness; they regard themselves primarily as Poles and play down their Jewishness, which is said to be limited to a more or less accidental fact of birth. This voice, however interesting, is in no way representative for the group as such.

6. Swedish/Jewish/Polish; importance and attractiveness

In what way and to what extent is being Swedish/Jewish/Polish important in the lives of the members of the group? The importance of subidentity relates here to its centrality and its potential influence of the different spheres of life of the group's members.

In view of the group, the fact of its Jewishness has played, and continues to play, a decisive role in its life. From childhood's Jewish socialization and the first encounters with anti-Semitism, through the Holocaust and the exodus from Poland, the history of the group is seen as determined by the fact of its Jewishness. Being Jewish has been of central importance for and has had a decisive impact on the life of the members of the group. Today, there is a deep awareness that their fate was, and is, closely connected to the fate of the whole of the Jewish people. This awareness expresses itself in, and influences, the group's time perspective and its feeling of interdependence.

As for the Polish subidentity, it is understood as belonging to the past of the members of the group. It is also now understood that even in the past, being Polish objectively played a less important role than being Jewish, as the subsequent events that led up to the defeat of the Polish identificational aspirations of the group were to show: *"Yes, for a long time we thought that we were as good Polish as all the others. But at the end they proved to us that we were wrong"*. Today, there is an awareness of never having been fully accepted as Poles, and, consequently, that the group's own past perception as Poles should now be

regarded either as an attempt that failed or as self-deception.

Today, being Polish does not play any independent role in the identity of the group. The Polishness of the members of the group is a closer specification of what their Jewishness is like. Even those belonging to the previously mentioned subgroup "Poles of Jewish origin" are less expressive when speaking of the importance of Polishness in their lives. Even they tried to run from the stigma of being Jewish, and the possibility of stigmatization seems to have played the most important role in their lives.

As described before, being Swedish is perceived as the citizen's rights, obligations and behaviour according to the civil rules of Swedish society. So understood, there is an expressed awareness of the fact that the fate of the members of the generation is now connected to the fate of the other Swedish compatriots, mostly in terms of international politics and economy.

Being Swedish plays an independent role in the identity of the generation, but as it is limited to less central regions of its intimate life, being more a framework for ethnicity than ethnicity itself, it has less importance than the Jewish subidentity. Thus, the Jewish subidentity of the group is the most central one.

To be Swedish/Jewish/Polish; each of the three subidentities can be attractive or repulsive—or in other words: the valence of each subidentity can be positive or negative in varying degrees.

Being Swedish is held in high esteem by the group. *"It is a good country, very good. There are shortcomings, but on the whole it is very good. We should have come here when we were young"*, or *"when one is abroad, it feels good to say that one is from Sweden"* are typical remarks. (It is worth noticing that members of the group spontaneously speak of themselves as being from Sweden, rather than being Swedish. It might be interpreted as an expression of their uncertainty as to whether their version of being Swedish will or will not be accepted). But the attractiveness of being Swedish has a non-ethnic content and is limited to the sphere of the civil society. Swedish eth-

nicity as such holds no attraction for the group. The members know little about it, deem it as out of date, and are quite indifferent towards it: *"Swedish customs and traditions? Certainly they exist. They originate from the Swedish countryside and now, when most of the population lives in the cities, they have no material base and are dying out. Take for instance Midsummer. It is an old, pagan festival. Anyway, can you imagine an old Jew as a Viking?"* Even those who chose Sweden as the country where they would like to be born, if they could be born again, did so because of the non-ethnic qualities of Swedish society.

Apparently the attractiveness of being Swedish lies not in its ethnic content but in its civil qualities. Swedishness is appreciated as a vessel in which ethnicity can be kept in a non-conflicting way.

The question of the relative attractiveness of the group's ethnic subidentities with ethnic content, is a choice between the Polish and the Jewish subidentity on one hand, and a willingness to accept being what one knows one is on the other.

The first part of this question is much easier to answer than the second. Today, being Polish is rejected because it conflicts with being Jewish, an evident result of the earlier failure of the group's claim for Polish identity. Being Jewish is now highly desirable. Given the chance of being born again, the members of the group would choose to be born Jewish and—to a smaller extent—preferably in Israel.

But this postulated modern model of an attractive Jewishness is not the group's real situation. The social reality of the members of the group is to be Jews in the Diaspora and to have been confronted with anti-Semitism for most of their lives. In fact, what the members of the group do and are today, is to a large extent the result of this continuous confrontation. Whether being Jewish is attractive despite anti-Semitism, or on the contrary, because of the painful experience of having been subjected to it, is not clear. *"It is not easy to be a Jew. It never was. It is much easier to be anything else, a Pole, a Russian, I do not know what. Anybody's life is easier than a Jew's. But anyhow, despite all, I would not*

change".

The picture presented here becomes even more complicated when the subjects of preserving Jewish identity and the threats to the welfare and security of their grandchildren are discussed. The group declares emphatically that it wants its grandchildren to remain Jewish and actively to identify themselves as such (this, despite the fact that the possibility of intermarriage is not seen as something that matters much and that they would not want their grandchildren to become religious Jews). But the emergence of a strident anti-Semitism is seen as a matter that might endanger the well-being of the grandchildren anywhere in the Diaspora, and the terrorism which has Jews as its target is regarded as a serious threat to their future security. There is no solution to this dilemma: *"Of course I would like my grandchildren to feel Jewish—I would like that very much. But it would be much easier for them if they did not, they could avoid so many dangers. I would not like them to suffer as we did. This is a problem, a big problem"*. This dilemma shows a continuing tragic dimension to Jewish existence today.

Two additional features are of interest. Within the group, there is a subgroup which rejects Israel as the place it would like to have been born in. This is connected to this subgroup's view on the state of Israel as politically reactionary, *"allied with the imperialist camp against the forces of peace"*.

Another interesting feature is that the members of the subgroup "Poles of Jewish origin" declare that it does not matter if they were born Jewish again or not. In detailed discussion of such statements, however, it becomes clear that the attractiveness of Jewishness is negative to them and that its salience (their awareness of being Jewish) is high. They see their Jewishness through the eyes of non-Jews and try to adapt it to their supposed demands: *"I think that one should not brag of one's Jewishness. There are those who were like that in Poland and they are still like that now. Why attract so much attention? One has to adapt oneself, does one not?"*.

Even if not explicit, a desire not to be what one knows one is perceived as, can be

felt here. This situation is one of marginality and is likely to continue to produce tensions related to identity for this subgroup.

With all these complications and limitations, there is an overall picture in which being Swedish is attractive as a civil status and being Jewish is attractive for its ethnic content.

The Polish subidentity exists interwoven with the Jewish one. Now diminished, it seems to perform two important, separate functions— as a sensitive point of comparison between the attractivenesses of past identificational aspirations and the present balance of subidentities, and as a closer description of the kind of Jewishness represented by the group.

7. Marking-off and alignment

From whom does the group mark itself off? To what extent, on what ground and with whom does it see itself aligned?

In general, minorities tend to be conscious of the majorities from which they are marked-off. In this case, however, the members of the group, strongly rejected direct attempts to find out their definition of the marking-off group. Having lived most of their lives under the banner of internationalism, and having experienced anti-Semitism, they automatically reject questions that sound as if they stress divisions and separateness, but are positive to questions which emphasize what unites groups and nations.

On the other hand, however, the interviews clearly indicate the group's awareness of having been marked-off and of marking "back". This seemingly inconsistent behaviour must be explained by the fact that the group still retains some of its former internationalistic postulates. As one respondent said: *"To have suffered from anti-Semitism does not mean that one has to become a racist oneself"*. When direct questions about marking-off are replaced by more indirect ones, from under the surface there appears an awareness of a separate particularity in the group's Jewishness, in which the element of being marked-off and its reverse,

of marking "back", is discernible.

The marked-off groups vary according to different contexts. When relating to different events in Jewish history, especially the tragic ones, the marked-off group is defined as "non-Jews" or, less often, as "Catholics". The closer to the present, the more precisely the marked-off groups are defined. In the context of the Holocaust, the main marked-off group consists of Germans (but even Ukrainians and Poles are mentioned). In the context of the group's former active life, the marked-off group is defined as "Poles".

In the context of the present life of the group, however, the picture is ambiguous; in some cases "non-Jews" are mentioned, in some others, "Swedes" (meaning ethnic Swedes), in yet others "Muslims". Apparently, the marked-off groups of the present are located in different dimensions of the group's perception of reality. The "Poles" are mentioned in relation to the group's Polish past as perceived now, the "Swedes" in the context of Sweden's multiethnic society, the "non-Jews" in relation to Jewish fate, "Muslims" in relation to the Middle East conflict and to the perceived danger of terrorism.

On the whole, the fact of not feeling the need or not being able to pinpoint one current distinctive opposing group, might be interpreted in two ways; either as a proof of the fact that the group perceives its reality very differently on different dimensions, or, that it does not perceive itself as confronting any drastically opposing radical danger to the foundations of its existence.

As already mentioned, the group regards itself as Jews and as a part of the Jewish nation. What is the nature of this state of belonging? Is it based on a perception of similarities or on interdependence?

There is an awareness of the similarities between Jews. These similarities are located in the field of history and tradition.

But dissimilarities are also clearly perceived, such as those existing between the religious and non-religious, between the Yiddish speaking and non-Yiddish Hebrew speaking, between Ashkenazim (the descendants of the Jews who in the early Middle Ages settled in

Central Europe) and Sephardim (descendants of the Jews of Spain and the Orient). No special similarities are perceived in the field of physical or racial attributes. Thus, if only similarities constituted the common basis, they would not be sufficient.

Alignment, the "community", is first and foremost based on interdependence. The feeling of interdependence is very strong. Here, it was measured by questions as to whether, in what way and to what extent the members of the group feel that their fate is tied to the fate of the Jewish people.

The members of the group state explicitly that they are very much aware of such an interdependence. There is high sensitivity about the positive and negative attitudes of the non-Jews towards the Jewish minorities in their respective countries. Pride is felt when a Jew is awarded the Nobel Prize or when the Ethiopian Jews were brought to Israel. Anti-Jewish persecutions anywhere in the world result in a feeling of solidarity with those persecuted. Insults and praise, threats and safety, low or high prestige of Jewish groups or individuals elsewhere, are felt to be of concern to the individual members of the group. The sense of interdependence is distinct.

A similar picture appears when the inter-relatedness between the Jewish communities in the Diaspora and the state of Israel is discussed. If Israel's prestige decreases in the eyes of the world, it is seen as negatively affecting the prestige of the Jews outside Israel. It is felt that it is Israel's obligation to come to the rescue of persecuted Jews, and, to a lesser degree, that the Jewish minorities in the Diaspora should show solidarity with Israel.

However, there is also a distinct subgroup which is of the opinion that the Jewish communities in the Diaspora should not always be ready to express solidarity with Israel. The reason for this is two-fold. The world's perception of the Jews in the Diaspora as always taking Israel's side is seen as a potential source of anti-Jewish feelings. Also, as previously mentioned, the state of Israel is defined by some as the tool of imperialism in the Middle East and, as such, it does not deserve any support. These views are typical of the subgroup "Poles

of Jewish origin" and of the hard core of those still faithful to the communist ideas of their youth. The feeling of interdependence with Israel of these subgroups is much less than the majority's; the same is also the case with their feeling of interdependence with other Jews in the Diaspora. The most interesting observation about these subgroups is that, in their view, the non-Jewish world perceives the Jews in the Diaspora and Israel as mutually interdependent, and—to a lesser degree—Israel as central to the Diaspora. This is recognized but regretted as being wrong and dangerous.

According to the majority, Israel's central position in relation to world Jewry is to be understood as a spiritual and a cultural one. Critical opinions are often voiced regarding the gap between what Israel should be—a spiritual center and a moral example—and what it is, as comments on different financial-political scandals and social problems in Israel indicate. The general opinion is, however, that given peace, Israel will be able to develop all its potential and meet the high moral and social expectations of this group.

Israel is also seen as a defender of, and potential refuge for, oppressed Jewish minorities, which in itself also constitutes an additional source of pride: *"Do you remember Entebbe? And what would you say about Falashas [the Jews of Ethiopia - J.S.]? Now the situation is completely different. The times when they could do to the Jews whatever they wanted and nobody cared, these times are over."*

Thus, the overall picture of alignment is that it is not based on a perception of similarities, but on a sense of interdependence. In the situation of mutual interdependence, Israel is seen as a shield against anti-Semitism and as a defender of persecuted Jews, but also as dependent on solidarity from the Jews in Diaspora. Without going into an analysis of the development of the group's view on Zionism and Israel during its whole history, I would like to stress that this part of its world view is one in which the most radical changes have taken place.

8. Historical perspective

In the long history of the Jewish people there are many chapters and subchapters. The question of whether or not to apply a time perspective and to see oneself against the background of the total Jewish history or its parts, is central to Jewish identity. Does the group see itself on the continuum of Jewish history or as not being connected to its past and future? And, if it does, is its time perspective oriented towards a Jewish past, present or future? Which segments of Jewish history are seen as a source of pride or shame? To what extent and in what way are Jewish past, present and future seen as interrelated? Are there any specifically Jewish goals that the group strives to attain; and if there are—are they attainable?

The group of former Jewish communists from Poland clearly sees itself in the perspective of both Jewish and general history. Firstly, the group perceives itself as a subgroup of Polish Jewry in the period between the World Wars. The members of the group see their own emancipation programme as born out of the general conditions of Polish Jewry of that period (as well as of the situation and problems of a society divided by class conflicts) and as being parallel to Bundism and Zionism, two other programmes aiming at Jewish emancipation. The goal shared by Bundists and this group was a socialist, classless society. The differences between those two programmes are today perceived as relating to methods (revolution or reform), but also as one between Jewish particularism (Bund) and total universalism (the communists).

The group recalls that it was most hostile towards the Zionist programme. As opposed to their own, which aimed at emancipation of the Jews along with the whole of humanity, the Zionist programme was perceived as narrowly nationalistic, bourgeois oriented and reactionary.

It is characteristic that today, with the benefit of hindsight and without a belief in the communist vision, the prevailing view is that the Zionist alternative was the only realistic and the "right" one.

But even here, there is a distinct subgroup which still rejects Zionism as reactionary and nationalistic. In its opinion the communist vision was, and still is, right; only it has been implemented in a wrong way. The evaluation of the reasons for its failure and the prescriptions for how the vision still could be better put into practice, however fascinating, are beyond the scope of this article.

The group sees itself also on a longer time continuum of Jewish history. Describing their own life career's, the members of the group refer spontaneously to general Jewish history. The history seems to start with the destruction of the Second Temple. From there, there seems to be a jump to Jewish history of the Middle Ages and on, with stress put on the persecutions of Jews. The most important events are seen in the persecutions and expulsions during the times of Crusades, in the expulsion of Jews from Spain and in the Chmielnicki uprising in Ukraine (when over 100,000 Jews were killed). The next jump forward in time, leads directly to the end of Poland's partition and to the situation of Polish Jewry between the wars.

The approach to the past is selective. In the group's memory, the tragic events in Jewish history and the history of Jews in Europe are emphasized. The peaceful chapters in Jewish history (with the exception of the "Golden Period" in Spain before the expulsion), as well as Jewish history outside Europe, are not spontaneously recalled by the group as part of its past oriented section of time perspective.

No specific events in the past are defined as particular sources of pride or shame. Some pride is taken in the general picture of hardship and endurance. Here, it is interesting to note that many respondents refuse to discuss past events in Jewish history in terms of pride, because this would be a nationalistic approach which they disapprove of.

Alongside the prevailing opinion that the life-long devotion of the group to the communist idea was a tragic mistake, there is a view that this devotion is not to be regarded as a source of shame. However, sometimes when they describe particular events in their lives, members of the group often admit to feelings of personal shame for what they have or have

not done.

Among those still faithful to the communist idea, their devotion to the vision constitutes in itself a source of pride.

The "Poles of Jewish origin" declare themselves more or less indifferent to past events in Jewish history.

The Holocaust occupies a special position in the time perspective of the group. The members of the group survived the war in the Soviet Union. When the German armies approached, they fled eastward, some directly from Polish prisons. They left behind most of their families and friends. When they returned to Poland after the end of the war, they found almost none of their relatives and friends alive. The realization of this was a traumatic experience. ("[In the train—J.S.] *I asked a nice, young man, tell me, there are no Jews at the stations, what does it mean, where are all the Jews? And he told me, there are no Jews any longer, did you not know? I could not comprehend it, I refused, it was ridiculous, Poland without Jews? It can not be possible*") This was the end of Polish Jewry, at least as it was before.

After the initial shock, the group came to regard the Holocaust as a product of National Socialism, perceived as the most extreme creation of the capitalist society.

In this way, the shocking news of the extermination of six million Jews generated two reactions. One was an even stronger devotion to the communist vision ("*It showed and proved what capitalism is capable of*") and to the communist regime ("*In the Polish countryside after the war, the Jews who returned, communists and common Jews, were in constant danger of being killed. And many were killed. The Party and the Organy [police and military -J.S.] were the only shield for the Jews*"). Another reaction was that many started consciously to strive to escape from the stigma of being Jewish ("*We wanted to spare our children this*").

Among the members of the group, there is now the prevailing opinion that all Jews, and especially the European Jews, should regard themselves as Holocaust survivors. (This kind of collective identification has many parallels in Jewish tradition; e.g. when celebrating Pesach,

the exodus of the Jews from Egyptian bondage, it is required that every Jew regard himself as personally participating in the Exodus.)

Asked about the lessons of the Holocaust, the group expresses two, indirectly contradictory opinions. One is that the lesson of the Holocaust and of continuing anti-Semitism evidences that a strong Israel is needed as a defense against a re-occurrence of the Holocaust. According to another view, the lesson is that Jews in the Diaspora have a moral duty to show solidarity with Israel because the danger of a repeated Holocaust does not exist in the Diaspora today—but in Israel, should it lose a final war. These two opinions are intensely felt; in this contradiction the continuing tragic aspect of Jewish existence shows itself again.

The members' view of the future contains an intense wish for peace in Europe in general, and in Scandinavia in particular (although the opinions vary very much regarding the best means of preventing war), and to keep Diaspora Jewry safe from the dangers of anti-Semitism and of anti-Jewish terrorism. It also includes the state of Israel, conceived as a spiritual center for the Jewish people, and as a refuge for persecuted Jews.

There is little hope for a lasting peace in the Middle East. The existence of Israel is not taken for granted—those who fear the possibility of a new Holocaust in Israel, should it lose a final war, hope very much, but are not certain, that Israel will prolong its existence beyond the year 2000.

There is no distinct wish that the children or the grandchildren of this group should settle in Israel, but this is regarded as a possibility.

For those still faithful to the communist vision, their view of the future is much longer; it even involves an evolution of the communist system towards the ideals of the vision. This is regarded as both possible and probable. In this view, the future of the Jews, together with all the other nations, is bound to this end. This subgroup even voices hopes for a change in Israel's policy, which will move it closer to the Soviet bloc and away from the "imperialist forces". This is also presented as a necessary precondition for securing Israel's future existence.

As previously mentioned, the members of the group want their grandchildren to preserve their Jewish identity. How it should be done, however, is less clear. Apparently contrary to their expressed wish, the members of the group are very liberal with respect to their grandchildren's choice to assimilate or to intermarry. Such choices are considered to be open to every individual and as such, they should be made without interference from others.

On the whole, the time perspective of the group seems to be well balanced, especially when the inclination of old people to look back rather than forward is taken into account. The group sees the past as leading to the present. There are more doubts and questions, however, regarding the way from the present into the future. A secure Jewish future can be described, but it is not taken for granted; it is built on hopes and surrounded by question marks and fears.

9. The shadow of anti-Semitism

The consciousness of anti-Semitism plays a central role in the group's Jewish identity. As previously mentioned, there is a strong feeling among the members of the group of having been stigmatized almost throughout their entire lives. Now, in Sweden, the group sees itself as freer from the shadow of anti-Semitism than ever before (even if some anti-Semitism is perceived as existing in Sweden, too). If they feel they are being marked-off now, it is most often as foreigners and not as Jews.

With the memories of having been singled out in the past, this new situation is a relief. But even in Sweden, violent anti-Semitism is seen as a possibility, should the economic and political situation worsen sufficiently.

There is an awareness of different degrees of anti-Semitism among the nations. But when asked to evaluate different nations with respect to their anti-Semitism, many refuse to answer; answers to such questions can be best obtained through indirect questions. It is much easier, however, to receive answers to questions about

which nations are least anti-Semitic. This general attitude should probably be seen as another effect of the group's non-discriminatory, internationalistic outlook.

The fear of being stigmatized is apparent when the question of self-presentation is discussed. When abroad, a member of the group generally prefers to present himself (or herself) as a Swede, rather than as a Jew, or as a Jew from Sweden. Meeting a sympathetic non-Jew in Sweden who does not know that he is Jewish, he would correct the mistake and admit that he is Jewish—but with a non-sympathetic Gentile the mistaken identity would maybe not be corrected. The fear of meeting a negative reaction when presenting oneself as a Jew is strong. This is emphasized by the satisfied comments on the reactions of certain non-Jewish Swedes, who gave a very positive response after having learned that the respondents were no anonymous foreigners but Jews from Poland. This is remembered, apparently because there was no certainty that such a reaction would actually occur.

One does not go around announcing one's Jewishness; a certain familiarity and closeness are required before such a presentation can be made with ease. In certain conflict situations, however, when pressed against, a member of the group might use his Jewishness as a shield against an hostile attitude towards all foreigners and as a weapon to strike back. Referring to such a situation during a lunch break at work, one respondent said: *"And then I told him that I am a Jew, that most of my family was killed by the Nazis, that I had to leave Poland because of anti-Semitism, and then I asked him; do you understand now? Do you understand what such things can lead to?"*

But what is the cause of anti-Semitism? In explaining anti-Semitism, the group links certain characteristics of the non-Jewish societies to the situation of the Jews as a minority. Among the most often mentioned external factors are the need for scapegoats and traditional religious anti-Semitism. When the members of the group analyse the internal causes of anti-Semitism, they describe the situation of the Jews as a minority in terms of a desire to preserve their Jewishness, coupled with

the impossibility of being accepted even if they try to assimilate. The analysis is often enriched by Marxist terms and analytical concepts. Violent outbursts of anti-Semitism are thought to be connected to changing economic conditions and to the existence of a class society. Anti-Semitism is often explained as the capitalist way to divert the attention of the working classes from the real problems of societies, as "false consciousness" or as "socialism of the fools"—explanations picked up from the ideological arsenal the generation is well acquainted with.

In contrast to this, there even is a subgroup which attributes the cause of anti-Semitism to different attributes that are perceived as characteristics of the Jews. *"If you could see all those Jews, high voiced, clothed in a completely different way to all the others, hardly speaking any Polish, refusing to take normal jobs and leave their small shops. It is not so strange that Jews were not very much liked"*—said one respondent, describing the Jewish section of his home town in his youth.

In this view, the Jews themselves are the main reason for the hatred of Jews. This subgroup is small; it is a subsection of the group of "Poles of Jewish origin".

Will anti-Semitism ever disappear? With reference to this question, a massive pessimism prevails. In some countries, those of Scandinavia, Holland or USA, anti-Semitism is regarded by the members of the group as controllable and kept within relatively narrow limits. Even in these countries, however, it is not expected to disappear completely. In most countries it is even worse; anti-Semitism is seen as a dark cloud, which sometimes changes into a storm. Muslim fundamentalism in the non-Western world is seen as a growing danger to Israel and possibly even to the Jews outside Israel.

There is a general belief that attitudes towards Israel and its secure existence are a test of whether or not a state or a person is anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitism is perceived as a weapon; it might be used again by the extreme right or left. The group does not exclude the possibility that a violent outburst of anti-Semitism, which could be a threat to the safety of Jews,

could occur anywhere.

This seems to lead to three separate conclusions. Firstly, the existence of Israel as a defender and a refuge for persecuted Jews is a necessity for the Jewish people as a whole (despite the fact, already mentioned, that a part of the group considers Israel as the place where a new Holocaust can happen, should Israel lose a decisive war). Secondly, Jewry in the Diaspora should be on its guard, always watching for signs of danger and ready to react. Thirdly, the children and grandchildren of the group should be able to choose their identity for themselves, this, despite the fact that the members of the group would like them to preserve their Jewish identity.

The only real optimists are those who still are faithful to the communist vision. They believe that anti-Semitism and all other forms of racism will indeed disappear. This will perhaps not happen for a long time yet; but if and when a true classless communist society is a reality, all forms of human oppression will disappear.

10. Concluding remarks

The present state of ethnic identity of the group of former Jewish communists of Poland is an outcome of the group's history. Through repeated processes of crystallization, adjustment and transformation, their identity developed in close connection with the political events and ideological changes in Central Eastern Europe and within the communist movement. To the burden of anti-Semitism and the lack of social justice, they saw a solution in a Messianic vision of a communist society without class or national oppression. They pursued the Millennium, a strategy of total emancipation. This vision guided most of their public and private actions—and it ended in a total existential defeat.

Ethnically, before the exodus from Poland, they opted for a Polish identity, either exclusively or as a complement to their Jewishness. After the existential defeat of the generation and the forced exodus from Poland to Swe-

den, a new, Swedish subidentity began to grow and interact with the Polish and Jewish ones; in this interplay, a reshaped totality of ethnic identity has developed.

The present content of the subidentities, their interrelatedness, and the balance between them, is peculiar and yet not surprising. While the Jewish subidentity is the central core of the very being of the group and a key that is seen to have determined its whole life career, the Polish and the Swedish subidentities seem to perform different functions.

The Polish subidentity has lost its previously independent position. Now it functions as a closer specification of the Jewishness, as represented by the group, and as a sensitive point of comparison between the attractiveness of the past identificational options and the present balance of subidentities.

The Swedish subidentity creates a civil framework of citizen's rights and duties and a stage upon which the group's Polish-Jewish ethnicity can act.

The group's own experience of stigmatization, the Holocaust and the perception of present threats to Jewish existence, has reinforced its sense of ethnic community. It is based on a perception of interdependence, interrelatedness and mutual responsibility, and strongly influences the group's historical time perspective.

Identity is not a state, but a continuous process. Although the group is now at the end of the road, the story of shaping and reshaping identity continues through their children,²² now in their thirties and forties, and through their grandchildren, born in Sweden, to whom the group passes on its experience.

Long before a theoretical concept of identity was born, there was a Yiddish saying: "Shfer zu zay a Yid" (it is difficult to be a Jew). Self-irony and black humour has always been a trademark of Yiddish, and so, a little later, this saying was completed with the words: "ober sy's a machaye!" (- but it's a joy!). Let this saying close this paper.

NOTES

1. As part of this project supported by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, 31 in-depth interviews were conducted in Sweden during 1985-87. During the same period, 11 control interviews were conducted in Sweden, Denmark, West Germany, and Poland. The interviews, which covered the entire life of those interviewed, were extremely time consuming, owing both to the nature of the subject, and to the psychological resistance which had to be overcome. They were conducted in Polish, according to guidelines for interviews prepared by the author.

In addition to this, 69 questionnaires on identity and identity changes were posted to selected members of the group. Of these, 42 were answered.

As highly sensitive personal matters were touched upon during the interviews and in the questionnaires, repeated guarantees had to be given concerning the secrecy and anonymity of the answers, as well as the personal integrity of the interviewees. In several cases the interviews could not, as planned, be recorded, and only notes could be taken. The material is presently in the custody of the author. A more extensive version of this article was presented at the Second Polish-Swedish Sociological Conference in Lund, Sweden, in May 1987.

2. For a survey of definitions of ethnic identity, see Isajiw, W.W., *Definitions of Ethnicity*, *Ethnicity* 1, 1974, 111-124; Peterson Royce, A., *Ethnic Identity*, Bloomington 1972, 17-33.

3. See the following works by Herman, S.N.: *Israelis and Jews. The Continuity of an Identity*, New York 1970; *American Students in Israel*, New York 1970; *Jewish Identity—a Social Psychological Perspective*, Beverly Hills 1977.

4. On events that led to emigration from Poland, see for instance:

Alsterdahl, A., *Antisemitism, antisionism—exemplar Polen*, Stockholm 1969;

Banas, J., *The Scapegoats*, London 1979;

Bauman, Z., *The End of Polish Jewry*, *Bulletin of Soviet and Eastern European Affairs* 3 (1969), 3-8;

Checinski, M., *Poland—Communism, Nationalism, Anti-Semitism*, New York 1982;

Lendvai, P., *Anti-Semitism without Jews—Communist*

- Eastern Europe*, New York 1971;
Wiesenthal, S., *Judenhetz in Polen*, Wien
5. On Polish citizens as war refugees in the Soviet Union, see for instance:
Gross, J.T., Grudzinska-Gross, I., *W Czerdziestym Nas Matko na Sybir Zeslali...*, London 1983.
There is also a large body of diaries and memoirs; see for instance:
Watowa, O., *Wszystko co Najwazniejsze...*, London 1984;
Wat, A., *Moj Wiek*, London 1977.
6. Mannheim, K., *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*. London 1952, 306.
For discussion and a review of the concept of generations, see: Abrams, P., *Historical Sociology*, Somerset 1982, 227-266.
7. There is a large body of literature describing the situation of Polish Jewry during these years, see for instance:
Heller, C., *On the Edges of Destruction*, New York 1977;
Marcus, J., *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland, 1919-1939*, Berlin 1983;
Mendelsohn, E., Poland, in: *The Jews of Central Eastern Europe Between the World Wars*, Bloomington 1983.
8. For a discussion of the concept, see for instance:
Cohn, N., *The Pursuit of Millennium*, London 1957, 307-314;
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Talmon, J.L., *Political Messianism. The Romantic Phase*, London 1960, 15-31.505-508.
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22. A research project on identity changes of the younger generation of Jews who emigrated from Poland to Sweden after 1969 is being conducted by Julian Illicki, Uppsala.