

# **The Secret Police and the Religious Underground in Communist and Post-Communist Eastern Europe**

**Edited by  
James A. Kapaló and Kinga Povedák**

First published 2022  
by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2022 selection and editorial matter, James A. Kapaló and Kinga Povedák;  
individual chapters, the contributors

The right of James A. Kapaló and Kinga Povedák to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data*

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

A catalog record has been requested for this book

ISBN: 978-0-367-27999-8 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-032-05588-6 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-0-429-33146-6 (ebk)

Typeset in Times New Roman  
by Newgen Publishing UK

# Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	viii
<i>List of contributors</i>	x
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
 Introduction: reframing the religious underground	 1
JAMES A. KAPALÓ AND KINGA POVEDÁK	
 <b>PART I</b>	
<b>Constructing the enemy: historical and legal contexts</b>	<b>37</b>
1 Shifting images of a harmful sect: operations against Inochentism in Soviet Ukraine, 1920–23	39
DUMITRU LISNIC	
2 Visualizing invisible dissent: Red Dragonists, conspiracy and the Soviet secret police	60
TATIANA VAGRAMENKO	
3 The legal context of religious activities in Hungary between 1945 and 1989/90	83
SZILVIA KÖBEL	
4 Turning religious practices into political guilt: Jehovah's Witnesses in the narratives of the Securitate files	97
CORNELIU PINTILESCU	
5 A coercive political environment as place of testimony: Jehovah's Witnesses in the era of state socialism in Hungary, 1948–89	112
ÉVA PETRÁS	

**PART II**

**Anti-religious operations** 129

- 6 Soviet state security and the Cold War: repression and agent infiltration of the Jehovah's Witnesses in the Moldavian SSR, 1944 to late 1950s 131

IGOR CAȘU

- 7 The secret police and the Marian apparition: actions of the Polish Security Service against the miracle of Zabłudów in 1965 148

MACIEJ KRZYWOSZ

- 8 Acting in the underground: life as a Hare Krishna devotee in the Soviet Republic of Lithuania (1979–1989) 176

RASA PRANSKEVIČIŪTĖ-AMOSON

- 9 Between simplification and absurdity: the Czech protestant milieu, “New Orientation” and the secret police 192

ONDŘEJ MATĚJKA

**PART III**

**Methodological approaches to religions in the secret police archives** 211

- 10 Secret police informer files as sources for the study of vernacular religion under communism 213

ÁGNES HESZ

- 11 Photographs of the religious underground: tracing images between archives and communities 234

KINGA POVEDÁK

- 12 Feasting and fasting: the evidential character of material religion in secret police archives 254

JAMES A. KAPALÓ

**PART IV**

**Secret police archives in post-communism: politics,  
ethics and communities 273**

- 13 The Patriarchate, the Presidency and the secret police  
archives: studying religions in post-communist Romania 275  
CRISTIAN MARIA VASILE

- 14 The possibility of researching religious minorities in the  
secret police archives of the former Yugoslavia 289  
ALEKSANDRA DJURIĆ MILOVANOVIĆ

- 15 If sex were a factor ...: the Securitate archives and issues  
of morality in documents related to religious life 302  
ANCA ȘINCAN

- 16 Redeeming memory: neo-Protestant churches and the  
secret police archives in Romania 316  
IULIANA CINDREA-NAGY

- Index* 335

NOTE: This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published in "The Secret Police and the Religious Underground in Communist and Post-Communist Eastern Europe", Routledge 2022, p. 148-175.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons BY-NC-ND.

Maciej Krzywosz

## The secret police and the Marian apparition Actions of the Polish Security Service against the miracle of Zabłudów in 1965

### Introduction

Although the communist system was imposed on Poland after World War II, various miraculous phenomena such as Marian apparitions and weeping images and the like continued to appear. This situation was a challenge for the atheist authorities, who tried to eliminate them as quickly as possible. Thus, they confiscated texts related to miracles, arrested their supporters and blocked roads to prevent pilgrims from reaching the sites of religious revelations. The secret police played an important role in these activities. This chapter describes the measures taken by the secret police to dismiss the 1965 Marian miracle of Zabłudów, a small town in the Podlasie region situated in north-eastern Poland. The miracle took place on the day of the communist parliamentary election, which was the cause of especially strong reactions from the then authorities. The secret police operation, which was given various codenames at the time, included the surveillance of pilgrims arriving at the site of the Marian apparition, a propaganda press campaign and direct violent intervention. These actions were effective as they managed to put an end to the pilgrimage movement and ridiculed the miracle of Zabłudów by associating it with ignorance and backwardness. As a result, it was forgotten and only after the collapse of the communist system were actions taken again by the local community to commemorate the events of 1965.

In the first part of the article, I briefly outline the general socio-historical context of miraculous phenomena in the Polish People's Republic, I then go on to describe the site of the Marian apparition of Zabłudów and the course of the related events. In the third part of this chapter, I describe the activities of the secret police leading to the dismissing of the miracle. Much of my account is drawn directly from the reports of the state security police, which included surveillance and informers' reports containing photos, which are based on direct observation, operational plans, dispatches sent to the headquarters in Warsaw and other similar documents. Despite the destruction a

number of the secret police documents in the end of communist rule, materials related to the miracle of Zabłudów survived and can be used not only to study the secret police activity, but also to do research on pilgrims' behaviour or the attitude of religious institutions towards the miracle. Furthermore, this study used additional existing sources such as minutes of local authorities' meetings, contemporary press articles and unprinted eye-witness account. In my research I treat the miraculous phenomena as social facts, not as theological phenomena; the question of their divine nature lies completely beyond the scope of my study.

## Miraculous phenomena in the Polish People's Republic

After World War II, Poland, like many other Eastern European countries, came under the Soviet sphere of influence. This was of great significance for the religiosity of Poles because the communist system that was imposed on them was, by definition, atheistic and began combating religious life and institutions soon after coming to power. This hostility on the part of the authorities also applied to miraculous events that continued to occur throughout the entire period of communist rule in Poland (1944–1989). This is not surprising because Polish religiosity, even today, is primarily of a so-called folk nature and involves a strong Marian cult (Królikowska 2014).

In my book dedicated to miracles from this period, I have estimated that there were about 50 miraculous events of social significance at that time (Krzywosz 2016a, 12). However, subsequent archival research and studies indicate that there were, in fact, many more. The problem faced by researchers, and which has resulted in a small number of scientific publications on this subject, is that these events often took place in provincial areas, in the proverbial middle of nowhere, and information about them has survived primarily in the memories of locals and in secret police materials. It was the secret police who mostly dealt with miracles, limited the dissemination of information about them and persecuted visionaries. In Poland, the function of the secret police was served by the Security Service from 1956.<sup>1</sup> In 1967, one of the internal Security Service training departments developed a “guide” for combating miraculous phenomena entitled “Niektóre problemy pracy polityczno-operacyjnej związanej z występowaniem rzekomych cudów” (Some Problems of Political and Operational Work Related to the Occurrence of Alleged Miracles) (see Figure 1).

Between 1944 and 1948, in the initial period of the establishment of the communist state, the degree of repression against miraculous phenomena was limited (Bączek 2014, 281). However, the communists quite quickly came to the conclusion that miracles were being deliberately caused by the Catholic clergy. This understanding influenced the type and scale of repression used. Numerous supporters of the first famous post-war miracle that took place in Lublin Cathedral in 1949 (Krzywosz 2016b, 46–8) were sentenced to imprisonment for many years. It was the beginning of Stalinism in Poland and hence

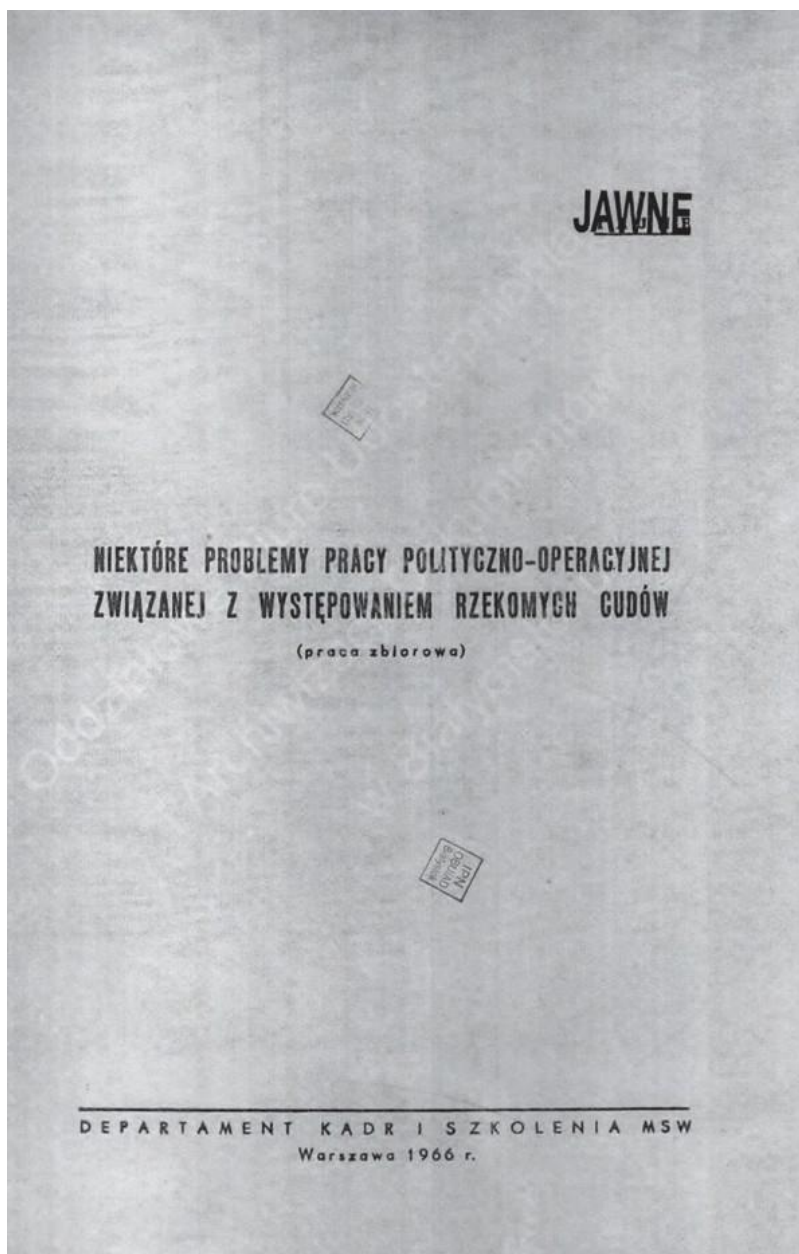


Figure 1. The title page of the book serving as a “guide” to combat miraculous phenomena in communist Poland (AIPN Bi 067/44, 3).  
©Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Białystok.



the repression was very severe. Due to fear of the communist authorities, the miraculous phenomena that emerged at that time were not widely propagated for obvious reasons and therefore, lasted for a very short time.

However, with the political thaw of 1956 and the increasing awareness on the part of the authorities that miracles were natural socio-religious phenomena, the level of repression decreased significantly. Consequently, they returned to the public space, as exemplified by the miracle of Nowolipki which took place in Warsaw in 1958 (Kaliski 2017). In the following decade, the most famous case was the Marian apparition of Zabłudów, to which this article is devoted.

The miracles and revelations that took place in the 1980s, when communism was coming to an end, were allowed to function fairly freely. During this period, some visionaries even tried to build their "own" sacred buildings, and the voice of the Roman Catholic Church had become decisive in determining the fate of miraculous sites. For example, repression of the pilgrims heading for Oława, the location of the activity of the visionary Kazimierz Domański, began only after the Episcopate issued a statement in 1986 in which the Catholic bishops stated that this phenomenon was purely natural and told the faithful not to go to the place of the apparitions (Biuro Prasowe Episkopatu Polski 1998). The collapse of the communist system in 1989 brought freedom to this form of religious life and adherents of miraculous phenomena could now publish texts devoted to this subject and establish contacts with visionaries from other countries without any obstacles.

## The characteristics of the site of the Marian apparition of Zabłudów and the course of the event

The miracle of Zabłudów in 1965 was one of the most famous miracles in communist Poland.<sup>2</sup> It took place in the small town of Zabłudów, 18 kilometres from Białystok, the largest city in the Podlasie region and the capital of the then Białystok Province. At that time, Zabłudów had 1,580 residents (Rocznik statystyczny województwa białostockiego 1965–1966, 30). Despite having the formal status of a town, it was actually a large village, which was influenced by various factors. One of them was the post-war influx of local people who brought their rural lifestyle to the town. Most of the residents were farmers and workers commuting to work in Białystok.

Both the Catholic and Orthodox Churches played an important role in the social life of Zabłudów and the surrounding area as Zabłudów is located on a Catholic-Orthodox confessional border. The religiosity of the residents of Zabłudów and the surrounding area can be best characterized, regardless of denomination, using terms associated with the phenomenon of Polish folk religiosity. Certain behaviours and attitudes originating in traditional folk culture and folk religiosity, however, underwent some changes during the communist period. Paradoxically, communism itself contributed to this by "freezing" the traditional form of religiosity. For various reasons, the Catholic

Church itself adopted a strategy which supported folk religion (Piwowarski 2000). This form of religiosity had a range of characteristics: the dominance of rites and rituals over doctrinal and ethical elements; an emphasis on emotional and experiential aspects of religion; a greater role played by women than men in its social functioning; strong worship of the Mother of God; expressing intentions not only through prayers and gestures, but also through objects (votive offerings, medallions); a tendency towards sensualist and visionary understandings of religious phenomena (cult of images and revelations); personal religiosity less significant; an enhanced role of the priest who is ascribed more authority than his pastoral functions normally entail, despite not always being the sole and final authority in religious matters (Czarnowski 1982).

#### May: a month of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The first Marian apparition took place at sunset on May 13, 1965, in a meadow about one kilometre from Zabłudów when a 14-year-old girl Jadwiga Jakubowska (see Figure 7.2) saw the Virgin Mary. The message she heard did not differ much from many other messages of this kind: Namely, the Mother of God ordered people to pray, convert and threatened that her Son would otherwise punish them. She also assured the girl that her sickly mother would recover. Terrified by the incident, Jadwiga fled home where she told her mother Maria Jakubowska about the event (Ambroziewicz 1968, 86).

The next morning, Maria Jakubowska stated that all her physical ailments subsided and thus she was the first to believe her daughter's words and decided to inform the priest Jan Skarżyński about what had happened. The priest did not show much interest in the apparition and ordered that the whole matter be kept secret (Ambroziewicz 1968, 86). Zabłudów was a small town so it can be assumed that the news of the Marian apparition and the miraculous healing spread among its residents fairly quickly through word of mouth. Moreover, the Jakubowski family did not obey the priest's request and talked a lot about what had happened to their daughter.

At one of the subsequent apparitions, about 100 people appeared in the meadow. These people sang Marian songs, said the Rosary and prayed. At sunset, the Jakubowski family appeared with their daughter who saw the Mother of God again. She foretold hard times ahead unless people prayed and promised to appear in a week's time, on Sunday May 30. Although other people present there did not see the Blessed Virgin Mary, they clearly felt Her presence, and their arrival was rewarded with a miracle of the dancing sun, often depicted in the literature devoted to Marian apparitions. Zygmunt Jakubowski, Jadwiga's father, described this event as follows:

My daughter knelt down and said to people: "People, kneel down, the Mother of God has come." At that time, I saw that the sun began to

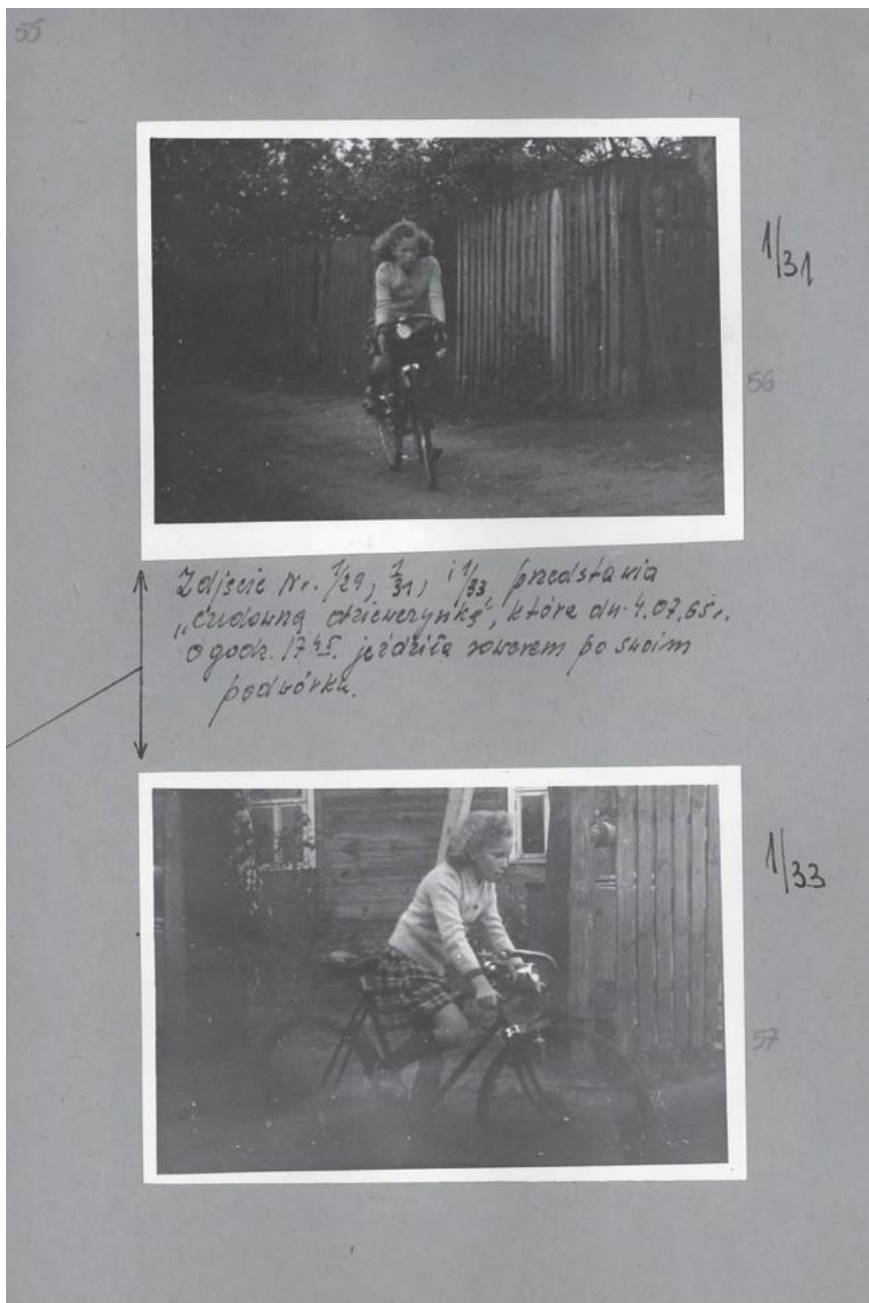


Figure 2. Photos of Jadwiga Jakubowska from a special album created by the secret police in 1965 (AIPN Bi 012/1337, 55). ©Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Białystok.

spin and drew closer to us. It was obscured by a blue veil, surrounded by cherry colours from below and by yellow colours from the side.

(Ambroziewicz 1968, 78)

Even though only some of the witnesses experienced something extraordinary, the Marian apparition was considered true and according to the state security police news of the event began to spread rapidly throughout the entire Białystok province (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 35). In line with the logic of this type of story, repeated mouth to mouth, the story of the apparition began to transform into a myth of a bedridden mother, her holy daughter and miraculous healing.

Although no information about the events in Zabłudów appeared in the press, many residents of the Podlasie region eagerly awaited the apparition announced to take place on the following Sunday. The local communist authorities also eagerly waited for the event that day, but for a completely different reason. Namely, the parliamentary election planned for that day. Elections in the Polish People's Republic were primarily aimed at demonstrating social unity and support for those in power, and thus primarily served a propaganda function. For this reason, the announced Marian apparition alarmed local decision-makers. At a meeting of the Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Białystok,<sup>3</sup> two days before the election, the first secretary Arkadiusz Łaszewicz stated:

The initiation of the "miracle" in Zabłudów is an unpleasant dissonance in the face of the active attitude of Białystok society in supporting the electoral programme of candidates for deputies and national councils. Appropriate steps have already been taken.

(APB KW PZPR 380, 212)

Łaszewicz was probably referring to the measures taken by the secret police at the beginning of the third week of May (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 70). These consisted of warning talks with people interested in subsequent apparitions. More overt actions were taken by the Citizens' Militia<sup>4</sup> which deployed patrols of the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia<sup>5</sup> on roads accessing Zabłudów, at the site of the apparition and at the Jakubowski family's house on May 27 (AIPN Bi 047/1309, 1–4). This did not escape the attention of the local population and, paradoxically, contributed to the popularization of the miracle. As one of the residents of the Podlasie region put it: "I don't believe it but there must be something in it as even the militia became interested" (Pawluczuk 1965, 1–2). At that time, the appearance of the miraculous meadow began to change: aesthetically arranged stones and bottles with flowers began to appear and black cherry branches were planted. Children gathered during the day and women in the evening (AIPN Bi 0037/46, 40), demonstrating the social expectation of another Marian apparition.

## Election Sunday

On May 30th, on the day of the announced Marian apparition and of the parliamentary election, thousands of people went to Zabłudów despite a rainy day and lack of any publicly available information about the miracle. The communist authorities organized numerous roadblocks, trying to prevent pilgrims from reaching the site of the apparition. The Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia from Białystok were also sent there and officers of the Citizens' Militia stood at the Jakubowski family's house (AIPN Bi 0037/43, 141). Despite the aforementioned roadblocks, people continued to arrive in Zabłudów, and by 4.20 pm there were already about 2,000 pilgrims near the miraculous meadow. While some of them prayed and sang religious songs, others waited passively for developments. As usual in such situations, various rumours circulated among those waiting, for example, about the arrest of Jadwiga Jakubowska (AIPN Bi 0037/45, 29). This only heated the already tense atmosphere.

Around 4.25 pm, the gathered crowd clashed with the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia, stationed at the site of the Marian apparition. The pilgrims were empowered by the presence of Jadwiga Jakubowska, who was forced out of her house around 4.00 pm by a crowd of 200 people. In the meadow, the militia used clubs, firecrackers, tear gas and live ammunition to disperse the crowd. The people did not remain passive, throwing back firecrackers and destroying militia cars with stones. The atmosphere of a regular battle is best reflected in the statement made by one of the participants:

The communists went crazy, it just seemed like hell was on fire. They threw firecrackers, fired ... and so on! ... And people and men, and children, and women; there was a huge pile of stones so they hit them with stones. They overturned the cars, broke car windows. And they (militia officers) threw firecrackers, so they caught these firecrackers and threw them back at them.

(Busłowska 1999, 12)

Around 5.00 pm, the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia withdrew from the meadow, leaving only the civilian patrols of the Citizens' Militia in Zabłudów (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 44). Ultimately, the fight was won by pilgrims, which in itself was considered a new miracle. The event was a breakthrough in the history of Marian apparitions and made Zabłudów famous throughout Poland. An estimated 5,000 people gathered in the meadow at 5.30 pm. The weather changed and the sun came out. When the announced apparition took place, the Mother of God said: "Pray and convert." The girl repeated her words to her mother who said this to the people around her (Ambroziwicz 1968, 87–8). Moreover, Jadwiga Jakubowska said: "Do not be angry that the militia beat you. Everyone will see a miracle at home, and whoever is ill will

recover" (AIPN Bi 0037/43, 142). Just like before, only the girl saw the Blessed Virgin Mary, although some pilgrims claimed that they also experienced miraculous events (AIPN Bi 012/1337, 133). However, it seems that the miraculous events on that day were rather limited, given the size of the crowd of thousands of pilgrims.

### Our Lady of Zabłudów

Due to the clash with the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia, the extraordinary atmosphere became heightened in line with the processes related to crowd psychology. The very fact of the victory over significant militia forces was perceived in a symbolic way (e.g. the defence of the Blessed Virgin Mary from ungodly communism) and treated as another miracle. As a result, the next day, according to the secret police, a small wooden cross was put at the site of the apparition (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 82) previously, no such religious objects had appeared there and some pilgrims began to treat Jadwiga as a saint asking her for blessing and touching the sick (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 136).

Although no successive Marian apparitions were announced, crowds of pilgrims, who were more and more numerous each day, came to Zabłudów, not only from the Białystok province, but also from other parts of the country. The pilgrimage usually consisted of two elements: seeing the miraculous meadow and visiting, or at least seeing, Jadwiga Jakubowska. In the following days, the site of the apparition was covered with stones and subsequent pilgrims brought new crosses (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 131), including Orthodox crosses.<sup>6</sup> In the meadow, pilgrims prayed, sang religious songs, left different votive offerings, such as rosaries, ceremonial towels<sup>7</sup> and money, as well as collected water (a spring appeared, or was actually dug) and soil, which were considered to have miraculous curative properties (see Figure 7.3). The phrase "Our Lady of Zabłudów" appeared in litanies (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 133).

Initially, information about the events that happened on May 30 and earlier circulated around Poland primarily through private letters and individual conversations because the first mention of the Marian apparition in Zabłudów appeared in the press as late as June 19 (Tak rodzą się mity 1965, 3) and was described in terms of ignorance and backwardness.

With the start of warmer days and nights, more and more people came to Zabłudów. The miraculous meadow was alive not only during the day, but also at night because some pilgrims slept there. It can be said that the site of the apparition served people 24 hours a day. The lack of subsequent apparitions was compensated for by other miraculous events. In addition to extraordinary healings, some saw Our Lady of Sorrows in a tree knot in one of the wooden crosses (AIPN Bi 0037/43, 86). We gain a sense of atmosphere in the meadow from the undercover surveillance photographs taken by the secret police (see Figure 4).





Figure 3. The site of the Marian apparition with Catholic and Orthodox religious votive offerings (AIPN Bi 012/1336/4, 163). ©Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Białystok.

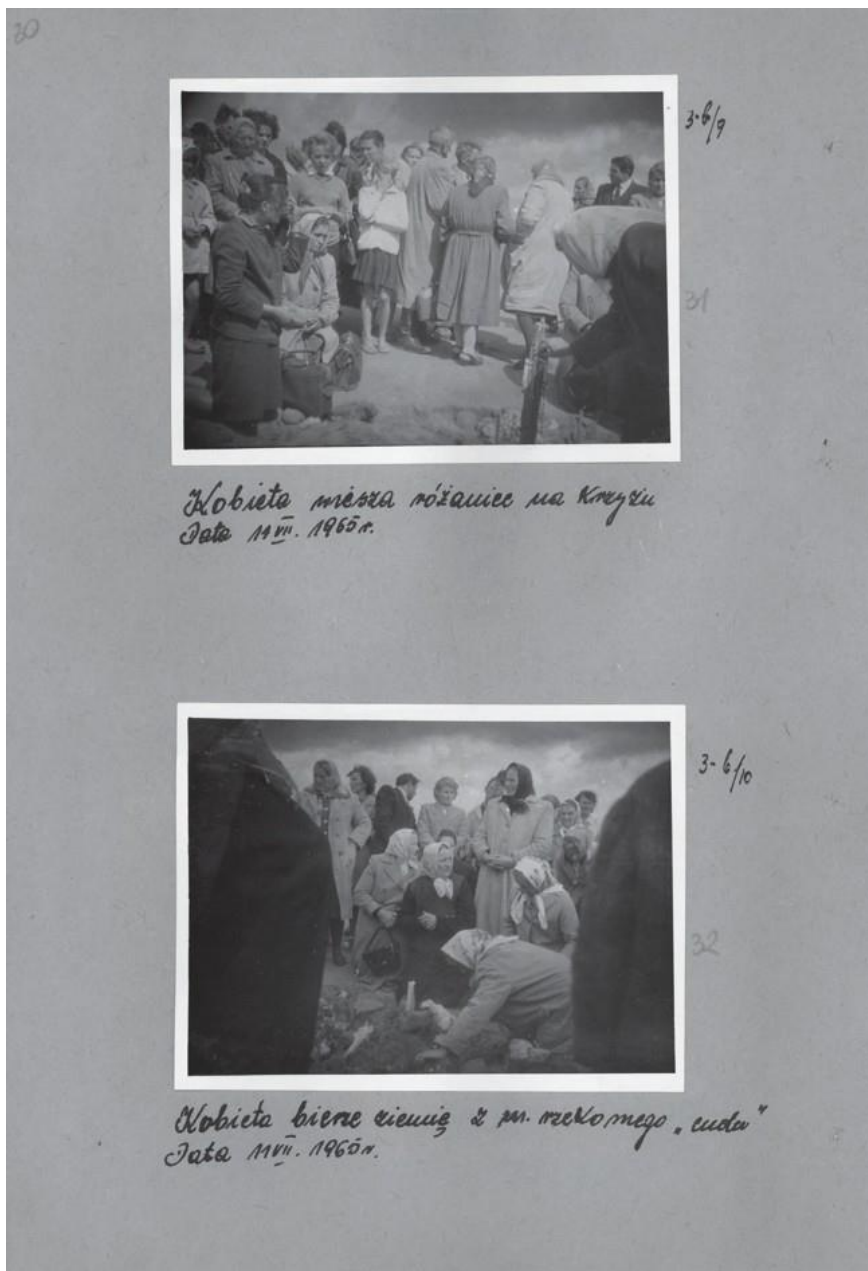


Figure 4. A page from the Security Service's album with surveillance photographs showing the behaviour of pilgrims at the site of the Marian apparition: hanging rosaries and collecting soil (AIPN Bi 012/1337, 30). ©Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Białystok.



Most pilgrims arrived on Thursday, June 17, the Catholic feast of Corpus Christi, and Sunday June 20. The secret police reported that in the afternoon of the 17th, there were an estimated 4,000 people at the site of the apparition (AIPN Bi 0037/46, 147), and on the Sunday, there were 5,000 pilgrims in the meadow (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 215), more or less the same number as on the Sunday of the election. This huge pilgrimage movement caused many unforeseen consequences. Among them were new apparitions outside of Zabłudów. Having returned home, the faithful who religiously experienced their stay in the miraculous meadow began to experience various visions or interpret events in a supernatural way. New Marian apparitions took place in Sokoły and Stare Krzewo, among other places (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 127, 129).

With the decrease in the number of pilgrims in the third week of June, the authorities began to take specific actions against individuals associated with the Marian apparition. On June 23, Jadwiga Jakubowska's parents were called to the provincial prosecutor's office. The day before, a Catholic bishop Adam Sawicki had met with Stefan Żmijko, chairman of the Presidium of the Provincial National Council in Białystok.<sup>8</sup> The effect of the meeting was a statement issued by the Białystok curia about the events in Zabłudów, telling the faithful to stay calm. In the following days, it was read in Catholic churches throughout the diocese (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 210). On Monday June 28, "The Local Sanitary Inspector's Warning" (1965, 2) appeared in the local press, in which people were warned against using water from the miraculous meadow because the level of pollution found in it classified it as sewage (Figure 5).



Figure 5. A general view of the miraculous meadow in June 1965 (AIPN Bi 012/1336/ 4, 278). ©Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Białystok.

At the beginning of July, there was a clear drop in the number of people coming to Zabłudów. In the first week of July, the Security Service estimated that there were 20 to 40 people in the meadow in the morning and 40 to 50 pilgrims in the evening (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 215). This changed situation influenced the attitude of the communist authorities, who began to take offensive measures at the beginning of the second decade to definitively end the Marian apparition in Zabłudów.

### The quarantine of Zabłudów

On the night of July 11–12, 1965, uniformed officers of the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia came to the site of the apparition and removed people arriving there. The same happened to those who tried to get to place "C" as the secret police referred to the forbidden area.<sup>9</sup> It was the first such explicit and decisive action of the authorities since election Sunday. The meadow was blocked and the quarantine of Zabłudów began. The entire adjacent area was controlled round the clock by the Citizens' Militia and the Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia. The constantly arriving pilgrims were sent home (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 229). On the first day, about 100 people were sent back before 8.00 am (AIPN Bi 0037/45, 175).

The residents of the Podlasie region who started a new day by reading the press could read in "The Statement of the State Sanitary Inspectorate for the Białystok District" (1965, 1) that local residents and all those coming to Zabłudów were obliged to take protective vaccination. At 1.40 pm, employees of the Provincial National Council from Białystok took crosses with devotional items from the site of the apparition and at 3.00 pm, the team of the district sanitary and epidemiological station began disinfection (AIPN Bi 0037/46, 162). The measures taken by the authorities clearly limited the pilgrimage movement. Access to the miraculous meadow was forbidden, and those who tried to break through to the site of the apparition were punished with a typhoid vaccination and a fine. If this did not deter the pilgrims and they still would not give up their desire to reach the meadow, they were taken to a hospital of infectious diseases for quarantine (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 237). The Zabłudów Miraculous Movement founded by a group of local residents who were actively involved in the Marian apparition, was subjected to similar repressive measures.<sup>10</sup> On July 21, three participants of this movement: Nadzieja Kalinowska, Albina Drewnowska and Marianna Minkiewicz, were isolated in a hospital for infectious diseases in Bielsk Podlaski for a week's observation (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 241).

Pilgrims' reactions to the blockade were mostly negative. Policemen were often asked by pilgrims for permission to reach the site of the apparition or to collect water from the miraculous meadow. The actions taken by the authorities were a disaster for all those who were convinced that the miracle of Zabłudów could solve their life's misfortunes (most often of a health nature). An example of a failed trip was the pilgrimage of Maria Woźna and

her seven-year-old mute son, among other people, from the Bielsk Podlaski district. In his report, Captain Józef Dragonek, who served in the Zabłudów area on July 13, stated:

Woźna Maria brought her dumb son hoping that he would be healed. After explaining why we would not let them reach their destination ... Woźna Maria began to cry softly claiming that "her son's last resort is gone." Everyone was poorly dressed, poorly fed; we had the impression that the costs associated with travel would seriously affect their home budget. They left the place very peacefully.

(AIPN Bi 0037/46, 153)

On July 24, the last article devoted to the Marian apparition entitled "Reflections on Zabłudów" (WIT 1965) was published in the local press. Signed under a pseudonym, the author claimed that the "the miracle" was over (WIT 1965, 3). The next day, on Sunday evening, as if confirming his opinion, the Białystok Security Service sent their last report to the headquarters in Warsaw with the following content:

On 25 July 1965, there were no gatherings at the place of the event in Zabłudów. During the day, 14 people tried to reach the place, including four from Warsaw province, two from Olsztyn province and four from Lublin province. All of the above were vaccinated and fined.

(AIPN Bi 0037/42, 245)

It can, therefore, be argued that by the end of July, the Marian apparition ceased to be a problem for the Ministry of the Interior in Warsaw, where reports were sent daily. However, what seemed to be over from the capital city's perspective looked completely different from the position of Białystok. Checkpoints established on the July 12 remained there until mid-September, and secret police officers, despite the dismissal of the mass pilgrimage movement, continued to visit Zabłudów. Their activities were aimed at people associated with the Zabłudów Miraculous Movement and the Jakubowski family. September 1967 can be considered the date of the ultimate end of the miracle as Jadwiga Jakubowska left for Częstochowa and joined one of the convents there.

### Actions taken by the secret police in relation to the Marian apparition in Zabłudów

Officially, the actions of the secret police fighting the miracle of Zabłudów were led and coordinated by the Fourth Department of the Provincial Citizens' Militia Headquarters in Białystok, headed by Lieutenant Colonel Józef Bzdela.<sup>11</sup> This department primarily dealt with the fight against the Roman Catholic Church, surveillance of the clergy of all denominations (legal

and illegal) in Poland, as well as religious issues in a broad sense, including miraculous phenomena.

The actions of the Security Service regarding the Marian apparition of Zabłudów lasted two years, from May 1965 until September 1967. They were given various codenames, such as: "Ada" "Zjawą" [Apparition], "Cud" [Miracle], "Rodzina" [Family] and "Obludnicy" [Hypocrites], depending on who was the subject of interest. The activity of the secret police was crucial in the elimination of the miracle of Zabłudów. The information obtained by the state security agency, was the foundation on which all of the open repressive actions of the authorities were based. Prosecutors' actions were initiated based on official notes of the Security Service. It was the secret police, not the Sanitary-Epidemiological Station, which planned the sanitary quarantine of the meadow. It was also the Security Service officers who conducted the numerous warning talks limiting the pilgrimage movement to Zabłudów. Some press articles were also based on secret police materials and were even commissioned by them (Lulewicz 2012). Above all, however, the Security Service was the brain that planned the successive moves of the authorities as it was its officers who made plans to eliminate the miracle. These plans were then either accepted or rejected by the coordination team of the Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party.

Based on the analysis of the actions taken by the secret police in relation to the Marian apparition in Zabłudów, three levels of activity can be distinguished:

- a) information gathering;
- b) creating and disseminating fake news;
- c) intimidating, threatening and causing a state of emergency.

Collecting information was the primary but not the only task of the Security Service. The secret police in communist Poland often interfered in social life through various types of provocations aimed at setting the course of events in the direction desired by the communist authorities. Informants created and disseminated fake news and misinformation related to the Marian apparition and the Zabłudów Miraculous Movement.

As for intimidation, it is difficult to say to what extent it was the conscious behaviour of the authorities or of the subjective state of people involved in propagating the miraculous phenomena. The fact is that secret police officers visited Zabłudów so often that some of them could still be identified by local residents by site even after some time had passed. The communist apparatus of repression functioning in the authoritarian state aroused, above all, fear in citizens, and the more extensive the secret police actions, the greater the fear.

### Collecting information

Information gathering was the primary task of the secret police. The activities related to this revolved around three main themes. Firstly, they concerned

the intentions and plans of the Jakubowski family and later participants of the Zabłudów Miraculous Movement and their relations with the rest of Zabłudów's residents, and with the local clergy in particular. Secondly, the secret police were interested in the popular mood and opinions in various environments about the miracle across the entire Białystok province. Thirdly, they collected information about the situation at the site of the Marian apparition and at the Jakubowski family's house, including the number of pilgrims, their opinions and places of origin.

### Information from Zabłudów

The method of collecting information was standard and did not differ from other routine activities of the Security Service. First of all, informers – a network of secret collaborators,<sup>12</sup> civil contacts<sup>13</sup> and business contacts<sup>14</sup> – were used. The secret police managed to obtain informers in all the environments in which they were interested. Initially, the lack of an informer in Jadwiga Jakubowska's family was a big problem. However, as part of the operational work, they managed to obtain such a person with the pseudonym "Rak" and received information directly from the Jakubowski family (AIPN Bi 0037/ 44, 306–7). With the formation of the Zabłudów Miraculous Movement, an informer who had access to its active participants was also needed. The secret police managed to recruit an agent called "Lech" to cooperate. At the first meeting, Captain Tomkiel ordered him to:

[M]aintain friendly relations with ... residents of Zabłudów who are interested in maintaining and disseminating news about the alleged "miracle" of Zabłudów. Moreover, to identify all persons who contact the Jakubowski family on a regular basis and provide more detailed information on these persons.

(AIPN Bi 0037/44, 185)

There were few secret collaborators in Zabłudów but they provided a lot of useful information. Father Bronisław Pożniak, who had the pseudonym "Janek" was certainly the most valuable source of information (Leończuk 2012, 118). He informed about the situation in the presbytery and the attitude of other priests to the miracle. Moreover, he provided the Security Service with information that clergymen received from their parishioners (AIPN Bi 0037/44, 262). "Czesław" was another secret collaborator who reported on the mood among the clergy in Zabłudów. Another priest, Czesław Czerwiński, hid under this pseudonym (Leończuk 2012, 118). He seemed to be less active in undercover activity than Father Pożniak yet his information was also valuable and used to verify "Janek's" denunciations.

Moreover, "Ekonomista" and "Adam" employed in a local dairy, reported on the mood in Zabłudów. Former secret collaborators who had the pseudonyms "Kwiecień", "Kiczajło" and "Łana" were also engaged in undercover work. The latter was important because he often wrote petitions

for the cancellation of compulsory deliveries to the authorities, among other issues, on behalf of farmers from Zabłudów (AIPN Bi 0037/52, 645) and he therefore had a large network of contacts.

What is more, other residents of Zabłudów, referred to as civil contacts in documents, also informed the Security Service about the mood and plans of the Jakubowski family, as well as the situation in the town. Based on their information, the secret police had a full picture of the married life, family and social relations of the Jakubowski family at their disposal. Later, the network of civil contacts was also used to obtain information about the intentions of participants of the Zabłudów Miracular Movement. Here is an excerpt from a secret police officer's note prepared after a visit to Zabłudów and meetings with informants:

On 17 June 1965 in Zabłudów, I talked with a number of civil contacts. M. G. said that her daughter, who was in the 7th grade, said she felt disgust when listening to the pious songs that were sung at the site of the "miracle" about Our Lady of Zabłudów and about Jadzia [Jadzia is a diminutive of Jadwiga] of Zabłudów. M.G.'s daughter even sang these songs. Therefore, I asked her to write the lyrics down and give them to me at our next meeting. She promised to do this by Sunday 20 June 1965. These songs are sung by fanatics from Zabłudów at the site of the "miracle".

(AIPN Bi 0037/46, 378)

It should also be added that, along with the repressive actions of the authorities, particularly the high fines, some of the participants of the Zabłudów Miracular Movement radically changed their attitude and were ready to cooperate with the secret police. For example, on April 28, 1966, Nadzieja Kalinowska – an active figure in the Zabłudów Miracular Movement, against whom an investigation took place in 1965 – offered to cooperate with the Security Service. Captain Tomkiel wrote:

Kalinowska emphasized keeping her statements secret and that under this condition she could inform about the Jakubowski family's intentions regarding the "miracle". She did not want to submit testimonies in writing because she had been often slandered by various people from Zabłudów since 1965. She invited me to visit her in her flat where she could talk freely.

(AIPN Bi 0037/44, 314)

Moreover, information provided by persons holding managerial functions in various institutions and thus obliged to cooperate with the secret police was used. For example, on June 10, comrade<sup>15</sup> Zygmunt Pankiewicz, director of Dairy Cooperatives in Białystok, met with the Colonel of the Security Service Leon Sobczyk, to talk about Zygmunt Jakubowski.<sup>16</sup> Pankiewicz

suggested taking him back to work in the dairy in Zabłudów so that comrade Malinowski, the head of the dairy, could influence his views (AIPN Bi 0037/46, 357). The secret police accepted the plan and Zygmunt Jakubowski returned to work on June 28. A few days earlier, Major Kalinowski of the Security Service met with comrade Malinowski to give him instructions related to Zygmunt Jakubowski's work. Major Kalinowski wrote:

I agreed with comrade Malinowski that after employing Jakubowski, he would observe his behaviour and statements on the plant's premises. Moreover, with the help of trusted employees, he would skilfully try to discredit and ridicule him in connection with his statements about the alleged "miracle". At the same time, I instructed comrade Malinowski to ridicule Jakubowski in a very skilful manner.

(AIPN Bi 0037/46, 401)

Moreover, the Security Service officers came to the primary school in Zabłudów to obtain information from the head of the school, Czesław Nurczewski, about the progress of Jadwiga Jakubowska's education and her school attendance (AIPN Bi 0037/46, 252, 264). As for technical activities, the secret police planned to set up a room wiretap at Jakubowski's house. On May 31, Colonel Leon Sobczyk submitted an application to the Ministry of the Interior in Warsaw (AIPN Bi 0037/46, 309), which the Ministry rejected (AIPN Bi 0037/46, 309). However, there were no problems with recording sermons in the church in Zabłudów with a mini-phone<sup>17</sup> (AIPN Bi 0037/ 45, 198).

The secret police department "W" dealing with perustration of correspondence, also began mass control of letters sent from Zabłudów, Białystok and other towns of the Podlasie region. This was done for at least two reasons. The first was to examine the public mood and attitudes towards the Marian apparition. The second was the desire to limit the spread of news about the miracle, which is why some letters were destroyed and did not reach the addressees (AIPN Bi 0037/45, 249). The first letter to be checked was sent from Zabłudów on the May 20 and the last one, also from Zabłudów, on July 30. In total, the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance contain materials describing the contents of 462 letters related to the miracle of Zabłudów (AIPN Bi 0037/45, 204–63).

The Security Service officers who devoted the most time and energy to the situation in Zabłudów were operational officers: Lieutenant Michał Uściłowicz, Captain Wacław Tomkiel and Corporal Aleksy Iwaniuk. They received the information they needed by working with informers. The surviving documents show that in June and July they were at the site of the events several times a week and had already been identified by Zabłudów residents as secret police officers (AIPN Bi 0037/44, 126). It seems that Uściłowicz was most personally involved in combating the miracle and he sometimes even expressed an emotional attitude to the events. For example, on the June 1,



when booking two Warsaw students at Jakubowski's house and asked why he did it, he replied:

For the purposes of our statistics, to analyse how many fools we have in Poland who believe in miracles. ... If they want to know the details [about the miracle], I can ... tell them exactly and told them. I added that if they do not believe me, let them ask wise people ... and not listen to such authorities as the two hysterics and stupid women, in whose family there were mentally abnormal people. I said that they should be ashamed of their behaviour and advised them to properly describe the actual state of affairs after returning home, that there was no miracle here.

(AIPN Bi 0037/43, 19)

A month later, Lieutenant Uściłowicz behaved in a non-standard way again because he was "invited" by the Jakubowski family to their home. Below is a fragment of his *Operational Note*:

On 6 July 1965 ... I saw Jadwiga Jakubowska riding a bicycle. I asked her how she was doing and whether she was promoted to the next grade level and the like. ... I asked her how her family was doing. As we were talking close to the Jakubowski family's house, the girl asked me to enter the yard. I came in, talking with her. No one was in the yard. The little one called her mother who was at home, saying that there was a gentleman with her and he might want to talk to her. The old woman came out of the house and seemed surprised. I started a conversation with her asking her how she felt after the miraculous healing, how they were doing and so on. Mr Jakubowski entered the yard, ... A conversation began with the entire family. Mrs Jakubowska began to complain that the authorities pick on them, that they backbite them, have described them in newspapers, etc. ... She began to swear that she had not hurt anyone in her life and that they had insulted her. ... I told Jakubowska that apparently people saw this and they didn't talk about this in vain. And if they said something about her, it was her fault. ...

In turn, the old Jakubowska said that the worst thing was when someone moved from the village to the city and then forgot about those who remained in the countryside. I said that indeed I came from a village, I didn't deny it, and I told everyone that I knew that I was a son of a peasant. ...

The daughter, in turn, said that they knew everything, that I did them a lot of damage and that I contributed a lot to what they wrote in the newspapers.

Stop wishing us wrong because it really isn't nice.

If something was nice or not nice, this was theirs and nobody else's fault, and with these comments I left the Jakubowski family's farm.

(AIPN Bi 0037/44, 63–4)



## Information from the Podlasie region

Secret police actions outside Zabłudów were carried out in various environments. Above all, they were interested in the clergy but they also paid attention to other professional groups. For example, workers from large industrial plants (Cotton Industry Factory in Białystok “Fasty”, Instruments and Handles Plant “Bison-Bial”) (AIPN Bi 0037/45, 113), journalists from the local Polish Radio station and newspaper *Gazeta Białostocka* (AIPN Bi 0037/45, 17), doctors (AIPN Bi 0037/45, 172) and intelligentsia meeting in local cafes (AIPN Bi 0037/45, 95–6). In the initial phase of the miracle, the focus was on determining the data of the people coming to Zabłudów and their opinions of the events. Below is an excerpt from *The Official Note* about the mood in the environment of the Białystok media:

On 31 May 1965, the administrative staff of the *Gazeta Białostocka* Editorial Offi commented on the miracle of Zabłudów. Active publishers included accountant Zofi Muzyka and cashier of the editorial offi Halina Orzechowska, both nonpartisan believers and practitioners. They talked about this miracle in a provocative manner, also pointing out, having been reprimanded, that many non-believing employees of the editorial offi would convert. The editor-in-chief Kazimierz Nowak was informed about the behaviour of both employees.

(AIPN Bi 0037/45, 17)

Among the church agents, the activity of the secret collaborator “Szczery” is noteworthy. On June 29, he ate dinner with Bishop Adam Sawicki from Białystok, during which they talked about the Marian apparition of Zabłudów. The bishop spoke about the attitude to the miracle, the communist authorities’ actions and those taken by the Church, and “Szczery” reported on it all to the secret police (AIPN Bi 0037/43, 156–7).

## Intelligence officers in the meadow

In addition to obtaining information by working with a network of informants and checking correspondence, the Security Service engaged intelligence officers of Department “B”, who collected information primarily through observation and tracking. In June and July, employees of Department “B” stayed in key places in Zabłudów, such as the Jakubowski family’s property and in the meadow, usually from 1.00 pm to 9.00 pm. Five intelligence agents usually worked a four-hour shift (AIPN Bi 012/1335/1, 20). In addition to observing, recording car registration numbers, eavesdropping on conversations, recording sermons, counting the number of arriving people and so on, they took pictures with a hidden camera, which were then put in a special album (AIPN Bi 012/1337). Thanks to this, today we know what the



Figure 6. Women singing a religious song at the site of the Marian apparition identified by the Security Service (AIPN Bi 012/1337, 64).  
©Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Białystok.

miraculous meadow looked like and how the arriving pilgrims behaved (see Figure 6).

The intelligence officers had to report every hour from a car set up in Zabłudów, equipped with a radio, with the help of which they were connected to the Headquarters (AIPN Bi 012/1335/1, 20). Below is an excerpt of a report from June 13 from Department "B":

– At 1.15 pm, there were about 100 people at the Jakubowski family's place of residence. Everyone wanted to see little Jakubowska. At around 12.55, the girl appeared in the window, and all the gathered people, particularly men, took off their hats.

– At 2.30 pm, there were about 60–70 people at the Jakubowski family's place of residence. The girl stood in the window with her mother. There was a tight squeeze around the window. The gathered people gave the girl money, even as much as 20 [Polish] złoty, which she in turn gave to her mother. The mother also took the money.

(AIPN Bi 0037/46, 367)

The intelligence agents were given special tasks on June 5 and 6, when the riots of May 30 were expected to be repeated. On these days, 28 agents were mobilized, including some directed from the neighbouring Olsztyn province.

Working in pairs, they were supposed to identify potential leaders in the crowd, urge hooligan behaviour, and take pictures of “people who behave actively in this environment and look like intellectuals in the way they behave, speak and dress” (AIPN Bi 012/1335/1, 58). If violence was used, the security slogan protecting the intelligence agent from a police truncheon would be the phrase “Z-6” (AIPN Bi 012/1335/1, 58).

Department “B” sent a letter to the Fourth Department of the Provincial Citizens’ Militia Headquarters in Białystok asking them to assess the actions regarding the miracle of Zabłudów. The letter summarized the observations of Department “B” and contained statistical data. The intelligence staff managed to identify “67 civil contacts, 748 cars and 513 motorcycles” (AIPN Bi 0037/52, 652) and take over 300 photos. The actions taken by Department “B” officers were positively evaluated by the Fourth Department. Captain Jerzy Porowski wrote:

The work of Department “B” on the alleged “miracle” of Zabłudów was organized duly and properly. ... On behalf of the Department’s management, I express my appreciation for the contribution of the intelligence agents to this matter.

(AIPN Bi 0037/52, 653)

#### Manipulative and compromising measures

The primary purpose of the secret police was to collect and store data. However, they sometimes engaged in reverse activity, namely, the dissemination of untrue or compromising information among the public through a network of informers or the media. Actions such as plots or provocations also occurred during the miracle of Zabłudów. Throughout its duration, the Security Service informers, whenever they could and avoiding the risk of exposure, were required to demonstrate the falsity of and ridicule the Marian apparition. For example, point 8 of *The Direction Plan* of the May 30 recommended “spreading misinformation” (AIPN Bi 0037/42, 37). Such activities did not necessarily arouse suspicion because a significant part of the society of the Podlasie region and the residents of Zabłudów were sceptical of the miracle of Zabłudów from the very beginning. When new Marian apparitions occurred in Podlasie, the Security Service from Wysokie Mazowieckie, not wanting to allow pilgrims to concentrate in Sokoły, deliberately spread the rumour about the new miracles they made up in Waniewo and Pietkowo (AIPN Bi 0037/43, 227).

Another activity of the secret police was to discredit the participants of the Zabłudów Miraculous Movement in the local environment. Based on the report of a secret collaborator “Łana” saying that there were statements from Zabłudów accusing Nadzieja Kalinowska of testifying against the local priest Jan Skarżyński, on the basis of which he had been fined as a punishment, the Security Service recommended that this false information be further promoted

through a network of informers. The goal was clear – to compromise the local community of Nadzieja Kalinowska, an active participant of the Zabłudów Miraculous Movement (AIPN Bi 0037/44, 130).

In autumn 1965, the secret police also prepared a plot using agent “Janek” which was a pseudonym of Father Bronisław Poźniak. He was instructed to describe the Jakubowski family’s attitude towards his visit to their house in a negative light when reporting to priest Jan Skarżyński. This plot was to deepen (according to the Security Services) the negative attitude of the priest to the Jakubowski family and, consequently, lead to their public condemnation (AIPN Bi 0037/52, 576). The secret police were also interested in the health condition of Maria Jakubowska, who considered herself a wonderfully healed person. The secret collaborator “Jan” reported on November 8, 1966 that she was bedridden, showing that she had not been completely healed. Therefore, the Security Service officer who read this report instructed Corporal Iwaniuk: “To develop a plan to disseminate information on Maria Jakubowska’s disease and further discredit her in public” (AIPN Bi 0037/44, 357).

### Intimidating actions

The actions taken by the Security Service to intimidate the Jakubowski family and participants of the Zabłudów Miraculous Movement were certainly not the most important aspect of the activities of the secret police. The frequent visits of Lieutenant Uściłowicz and Captain Tomkiel to Zabłudów were the result primarily of the requirements of their operational work, and not from their direct desire to intimidate those involved in the Marian apparition. The fact is, however, that this may have created a sense of danger. According to the preserved documents, the Security Service officers came to the Jakubowski family without any formal reason, not even a search warrant. One can imagine how the family living in the communist, authoritarian state felt when exposed to such unannounced visits. For example, on the June 2, Lieutenant Uściłowicz wrote:

At 6.30, on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1965, at Maria Jakubowska’s house, I found two individuals who talked with mother Maria and daughter Jadwiga. I check these individuals’ identity cards.

(AIPN Bi 0037/43, 19)

Corporal Iwaniuk had already talked to Jadwiga Jakubowska twice in her apartment by the June 4 (AIPN Bi 0037/44, 10). However, it seems that as the network of informers developed, this kind of activity was abandoned. Nevertheless, secret police officers also threatened the Jakubowski family. For example, Jadwiga Jakubowska mentioned that she was threatened with deportation to Siberia if she did not refute the information about the miracle (Szczesiak 1998, 186). After the quarantine was initiated, attempts were made to influence other people in a similar way. On the first day of its founding,

Lieutenant Uściłowicz met Nadzieja Kalinowska from the Zabłudów Miracular Movement in the market square in Zabłudów who was heading towards the pilgrims waiting at the bus stop, and told her:

[N]ot to hang around among strangers. Then Kalinowska started shouting loudly that she did not know what we wanted from her and asked me not to scare her because we would not be able to do her anything, and she would continue to do what she wanted and so on.

I told her again not to hang around with strangers there, to stop shouting otherwise, we would calm her down in a different way.

(AIPN Bi 0037/44, 93)

## Conclusions

My aim in this article was to describe the range of measures taken by the secret police to effectively eliminate the miracle of Zabłudów in 1965. Their activity can be analysed from various points of view including from the perspective of effectiveness of these actions or from an ethical perspective. It can be said that Security Service officers performed their tasks effectively. This is evidenced by that the fact the Jakubowski family and other persons involved in the miracle were completely entangled by a network of informers. This is confirmed by the notes of the secret police containing the comments of interrogated persons. For example, Albin Morawski, a participant in the Zabłudów Miracular Movement, who was arrested for his positive statements about the Marian apparition, warned a friend:

[N]ot to speak to anyone about the “miracle” because there are a lot of people in Zabłudów who help barbarians and report to the secret militia on who says what and does what.

(AIPN Bi 0037/44, 416)

It should be added here that this friend of Albin Morawski was the secret collaborator “Janek”. Thus, the Security Service knew almost everything that happened with the Jakubowski family, among the participants of the Zabłudów Miracular Movement and in the presbytery. The secret police’s successes were influenced by some objective circumstances, which made their work easier. Zabłudów was a small town and, in such communities, people know a lot about each other and it was virtually impossible to hide anything from neighbours. What facilitated the operation of the Security Service was the fact that there was a clear division in the local community as regards the attitude towards the Marian apparition. Some people believed in the miracle and others did not. It was from this latter group that those collaborating with the secret police quite often came. Moreover, the persons against whom the Security Service took actions were elderly or middle-aged individuals with low education, which certainly facilitated operational activities.



Figure 7. Religious ceremonies in the meadow on the 50th anniversary of the miracle of Zabłudów. © Photo by Małgorzata Kasperowcz.

Assessing the ethical activity of the secret police functioning in the authoritarian communist state, it is clear how consciously they not only fought against the manifestations of religious life, such as miraculous phenomena, but also attempted for ideological reasons to destroy the lives of specific people or the bonds that held the Zabłudów community together. However, the 1965



success was not complete. The memory of those events has survived in the local community. This can be demonstrated by a neat, glass chapel standing in the miraculous meadow with a statue of the Virgin Mary, a crucifix and fine votive offerings. In front of it, on the 50th anniversary of the miracle on the May 30, 2015, local people took part in a solemn mass celebrated in remembrance of those days (see Figure 7).

## Notes

- 1 The Polish Security Service were secret police whose purpose was to protect the communist political system. It primarily fought against the political opposition and the Roman Catholic Church. It was dissolved in 1990, and the documents it produced were forwarded to the Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance.
- 2 In the following part of this article, I use fragments of chapters 5 and 7 of my book (Krzywosz 2016a).
- 3 The Polish United Workers' Party was the main political party that exercised power in communist Poland between 1948 and 1989. It implemented the principles of Marxism-Leninism, as a result of which it pursued a conscious policy of secularization.
- 4 The Citizens' Militia was a public, state organization of a police nature, whose declared goal was to ensure public order and security. In fact, like the Security Service, it was often used by the communist powers to control society.
- 5 The Motorized Reserves of the Citizens' Militia were special units of the Citizens' Militia intended to suppress social unrest and riots.
- 6 For the attitude of the Orthodox population to the Marian apparition experienced by the Catholic girl, see Krzywosz (2003).
- 7 Ceremonial towels are a characteristic object of the local folk Orthodox religiosity. They serve aesthetic and votive functions.
- 8 The Provincial National Council was a provincial body of state administration in communist Poland. In practice, it pursued the political goals of the Polish United Workers' Party.
- 9 Other terms were also used, including: a place of ghosts, a place of miracle or a place of alleged miracle.
- 10 The Zabłudów Miraculous Movement refers to a group of people connected with the Jakubowski family, who aimed to sponsor and encourage further public Marian apparitions or at least to commemorate those that had already taken place.
- 11 The Fourth Department of the Provincial Citizens' Militia Headquarters should not mislead us because in the Polish People's Republic, local branches of the Security Service were located at the headquarters of the Citizens' Militia, which guaranteed them some form of discretion.
- 12 In the nomenclature of the Security Service, a secret collaborator was a person who signed a formal declaration of cooperation with the secret police and assumed a pseudonym. A supervising officer would then order him or her to perform various tasks, the most common of which was to collect information.
- 13 In the nomenclature of the Security Service, a civil contact was an ordinary citizen who cooperated with it. His or her help was used in reconnaissance and preliminary activities. This cooperation was informal so he or she did not sign any declaration and was not registered in the files.

- 14 A business contact was a person who, due to his or her professional and social functions, was obliged to cooperate with the secret police and inform about any matters that might interest them. Business contacts were mostly people who held administrative positions.
- 15 The term "comrade" was used in communist Poland in relation to members of the Polish United Workers' Party.
- 16 Zygmunt Jakubowski was dismissed from his job as dairy keeper in Zabłudów on the 31st May, the day after election Sunday. It was one of many repressions that the Jakubowski family experienced in connection with the Marian apparition.
- 17 A mini-phone was a small recording device placed in the clothes of a secret police officer, with a small microphone attached to outerwear.

## Archival sources

- Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej w Białymstoku [Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Białystok] (AIPN Bi) – AIPN Bi 0037/42. (1965); AIPN Bi 0037/43. (1965); AIPN Bi 0037/44. (1965–1967); AIPN Bi 0037/45. (1965); AIPN Bi 0037/46. (1965); AIPN Bi 0037/52. (1965); AIPN Bi 012/1335/1. (1965); AIPN Bi 012/1336/4. (1965–1979); AIPN Bi 012/1337. (1965); AIPN Bi 047/1309. (1965); AIPN Bi 067/44. (1966).
- Archiwum Pracowni Badań i Dokumentacji Zjawisk Mirakularnych w Polsce, Instytut Socjologii, Uniwersytet w Białymstoku [Archives of the Laboratory of Research and Documentation of Miraculous Phenomena in Poland, Institute of Sociology at the University of Białystok] – Pawluczuk, Włodzimierz. 1965. *Sprawozdanie z wydarzeń dnia 30 V 1965 w Zabłudowie. Niepublikowana relacja z zabłudowskiej niedzieli wyborczej spisana 31 maja 1965 przez świadka wydarzeń* [Report on the Events of 30 May 1965 in Zabłudów: An Unpublished Account of the Election Sunday in Zabłudów Written on 31 May 1965 by a Witness to the Events].
- Archiwum Państwowe w Białymstoku [State Archives in Białystok] (APB) – APB KW PZPR 380. (1965) [Documents on the Provincial Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in Białystok].

## References

- Ambroziewicz, Jerzy. 1968. *The Apocalypse* [Apokalipsa]. Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza.
- Bączek, Piotr. 2014. "Activities of Communist Security Structures in Response to the Events Considered Miracles in the Years 1946–1953" ["Działania komunistycznego aparatu bezpieczeństwa w odpowiedzi na wydarzenia uznawane za cuda w latach 1946–1953"]. *Saeculum Christianum XXI*: 279–90.
- Biurowo Prasowe Episkopatu Polski [Press Office of the Polish Episcopate]. 1998. "Information from the Press Office of the Polish Episcopate of 17 January 1986" ["Informacja Biura Prasowego Episkopatu Polski z 17.1.1986"]. In: *Do Not Despise Prophecies, But Test Everything: Private Revelations in the Light of God's Word* [Proroctwa nie lekceważcie, wszystko badajcie: Objawienia prywatne w świetle Słowa Bożego] edited by R. Pindel, 160–1. Kraków: Wydawnictwo M.
- Busłowska, Anna. 1999. "The Miracle of Zabłudów" ["Zabłudowski Cud"]. *Z Zabłudowskiej Ziemi*, (44): 7–13.



- Czarnowski, Stefan. 1982. "The Religious Culture of the Rural Polish People" ["Kultura religijna wiejskiego ludu polskiego"]. In: *A Selection of Sociological Works [Wybór pism socjologicznych]* edited by Stefan Czarnowski, 366–401. Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza.
- Kaliski, Bartosz. 2017. "Nowolipki AD 1959, or Miracle in Communist Warsaw" ["Nowolipki AD 1959, czyli cud w komunistycznej Warszawie"]. *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość* 29: 25–49.
- Królikowska, Anna M. 2014. "'Folk' Elements in the Contemporary Religiosity?" ["Elementy 'ludowe' w religijności współczesnej?"]. *Opuscula Sociologica* 4: 5–16.
- Krzywosz, Maciej. 2003. "Folk Religion on the Catholic-Orthodox Borderland from the Perspective of Private Marian Apparition" ["Religijność ludowa na pograniczu katolicko-prawosławnym w perspektywie prywatnego objawienia maryjnego"]. *Pogranicze. Studia społeczne* 11: 107–14.
- Krzywosz, Maciej. 2016a. *Miracles in the Polish People's Republic: Case Study of the Private Marian Apparition in Zabłudów [Cuda w Polsce Ludowej: Studium przypadku prywatnego objawienia maryjnego w Zabłudowie]*. Białystok: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej Oddział w Białymstoku.
- Krzywosz, Maciej. 2016b. "Sociological Aspect of Miracles and Apparitions in Contemporary Poland." *Przegląd Religioznawczy – The Religious Studies Review* 4: 43–56.
- Leończuk, Antoni Ł. 2012. "'The Miracle of Zabłudów' in the Light of Materials Collected in the Białystok Branch of the Institute of National Remembrance" ["'Cud w Zabłudowie' w świetle materiałów zgromadzonych w Białostockim Oddziale Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej"]. *Rocznik Zabłudowski* 6: 102–41.
- "Local Sanitary Inspector's Warning" ["Ostrzeżenie Wojewódzkiego Inspektora Sanitarnego"]. 1965. *Gazeta Białostocka*, 28 June, 2.
- Lulewicz, Sylwiusz I. 2012. "The Role of the Media in the Liquidation of the So-called Miracle of Zabłudów" ["Rola mediów w likwidacji tzw. cudu zabłudowskiego"]. *Rocznik Zabłudowski* 6: 68–101.
- Piowowski, Władysław. 2000. "From 'the National Church' to 'the Optional Church'" ["Od 'Kościoła ludu' do 'Kościoła wyboru'"]. In: *Sociology of Religion [Socjologia Religii]*, edited by Władysław Piowowski, 265–71. Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego.
- Statistical Yearbook of the Białystok Province 1965 [*Rocznik statystyczny województwa białostockiego 1965*]. 1966. Białystok: Wojewódzka Rada Narodowa.
- "Statement of the State Sanitary Inspectorate for the Białystok District" ["Komunikat Państwowego Inspektoratu Sanitarnego dla pow. Białostockiego"]. 1965. *Gazeta Białostocka*, 12 July, 1.
- Szczesiak, Edmund. 1998. *The Heal [Oni uzdrawiają]*. Gdańsk, Oficyna Pomorska.
- "That Is How Myths Are Born" ["Tak rodzą się mity"]. 1965. *Gazeta Białostocka*, 19–20 June, 3.
- WIT. 1965. "Reflections on Zabłudów" ["Zabłudowskie refleksje"]. (1965). *Gazeta Białostocka*, 24–25 July, 3.