

The Virus of Hate: Brown Book of the Epidemic

**A selection of xenophobic incidents documented by
the “NEVER AGAIN” Association
in the context of the coronavirus epidemic in 2020**



Warsaw, May 2020

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JANUARY

WARSAW. On 11th January, in an interview broadcast on **Polish Radio 24** (public broadcaster), **Dr. Jerzy Targalski**, a columnist of the *Gazeta Polska* newspaper and a lecturer at the Centre for Eastern European Studies at the University of Warsaw, made a bizarre statement about the COVID-19 epidemic, which included racial overtones. He said: “*We have yet to see to what extent this epidemic will spread outside of China, as so far it is proven that the Chinese are more susceptible than representatives of the white race. [...] I think it won’t spread*”. Then, on 28th March, in an interview for the radical-right **FronDa.pl** website, Targalski was asked: “*Could this pandemic be a result of factional infighting in China?*” and he replied: “*When you know Communism, you know that there’s no crime a Communist wouldn’t stoop down to in order to take or preserve power*”. Targalski is a host of many television programmes on right-wing **TV Republika** and a co-author of the book, **Children of Officials** (2013), which presented modern Poland as ruled by a conspiracy of the post-Communist elite, often with Jewish background. This book was criticised for manipulation and antisemitic stereotypes.

WARSAW. On 30th January, speaking on Radio RMF FM, during a conversation about COVID-19, the Chief Sanitary Inspector, **Jarosław Pinkas** stated that “*in Poland there is no such virus. Therefore, the endangerment is close to zero*”, and next he associated that problem exclusively with national origin. When asked by journalist, Marcin Zaborski: “*So, if I run a temperature of thirty-eight degrees, have a cough and feel like I’m choking, but I have not visited China, should I not raise the alarm?*”. Pinkas answered: “*You should not raise any alarm. Please analyse where you were and if indeed there were any Chinese people in your surroundings. [...] Did you speak to a Chinese woman or some other Chinese citizen, who had been to China within the last two weeks? If you are not aware of any such incidents, then you are absolutely safe*”. Based on the words of Pinkas, one can assume that COVID-19 can be spread solely by the Chinese and, for instance, Polish tourists coming back from abroad, or that citizens of other countries are not carriers of the disease. This type of statement from the Chief Sanitary Inspector could have contributed to raising the risk of contracting the virus in Poland.

FEBRUARY 2020

POLAND. In February and in successive months, social media in Poland carried a large number of homophobic comments and conspiracy theories pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some examples of posts observed on Twitter:

- ‘*F. ck you in the ass, you faggots, that virus is your fault*’
- ‘*Faggots and their faggotry – as a consequence – the AIDS disease. Eating rats, cats, dogs, bats etc. – as a consequence CORONAVIRUS. [...] In other words, a history of pathology*’
- ‘*Faggots mean diseases, who knows if coronavirus is not another of your inventions!!!*’
- ‘*Authentic f.cking moron and son-of-a-bitch. Maybe Coronavirus will catch up with him, Lesbians and faggots will help*’ (directed towards the Mayor of Poznań, Jacek Jaśkowiak)
- ‘*Today I read that those most vulnerable to infection by coronavirus are faggots and lesbians*’
- ‘*380 people were infected by coronavirus in Belgium during mass group sex [this is an example of fake news, nothing of the sort has been documented – translator’s note]. In connection with that we*

demand the penalisation of homosexuality and arrest of all sexual perverts from LGBT in Poland! Deviants constitute a great epidemiological danger!' (these words were posted on the profile of the extreme rightist group, **Narodowy Lublin**)

- *'The deviants chickened out because they have guilty consciences. They intuitively feel that coronavirus may punish them'*

- *'Hey you, Rabiej, who tells them to agree with perverts like you? It's because of you lot that we have this coronavirus, isn't it?'* (addressed to Paweł Rabiej, Deputy Mayor of Warsaw, who is openly gay)

- *'Gender is even more dangerous than coronavirus. The virus attacks children gently. Gender ideology has no pity on them and attacks them with its complete perverted ruthlessness. It dazzles out of everywhere: cinemas, newspapers, television, the internet. The child need not touch it. Even eye contact is infectious'*

- *'There are various threats, e.g. civilisational: the war in Syria and the one in Ukraine, gender ideology, danger stemming from the stupidity of the opposition. With such a background, coronavirus is only one of many threats...'* (this post comes from the account of user, **Marlena-Malina #Duda2020**; she also posted the following phrase as her tagline: *'I am against the rainbow plague! This zone is free of LGBT and other perversions'*).

WARSAW. On 15th February, the driver of an Uber taxi asked two women who had placed an order for his services about their nationality. They were Vietnamese students of Collegium Civitas university in Warsaw. One of them stated: *"The driver said that if we were of Chinese origin, he would not allow us to get in his car"*.

WARSAW. On 26th February, **Janusz Korwin-Mikke**, a Member of Parliament representing the **Confederation** party posted on his **Twitter** account the following about the coronavirus epidemic: *'A virus killing 10% of those infected is not any «biological weapon», but a means of improving the genetic base of the nation and humankind (because the weakest and those with the least foresight die)!!'* This was his reaction to the words of the Director of the Bielański Hospital in Warsaw, who, in a statement to the daily *Rzeczpospolita* newspaper, criticised the state of readiness of the Polish health service at the time of the epidemic, and highlighted the gravity of the situation. Korwin-Mikke repeated his theory about the alleged positive aspects of coronavirus in other statements to the media, including to the daily tabloid newspaper, *Fakt* (February 26, 2020): *"Natural selection is the motor driving human development, which is known by anyone who has studied Darwin. Thanks to the fact that the weakest die, the quality of the remaining nation or community is improved"*. On 27th February, on the television programme **Punkt widzenia**, broadcast by **Polsat News**, Korwin-Mikke voiced similar claims, combining them with an antisemitic conspiracy theory: *"Jews are now a power because they have experienced pogroms. As a result of the pogroms, the strongest, the most able Jews survived – this is a warning to anti-Semites. [...] And there even exist such theories that rabbis intentionally provoked pogroms, especially in order for Jews to survive such pogroms, and then there is a natural selection among Jews"*. Korwin-Mikke also spoke out on the subject of the COVID-19 pandemic in many countries, once more stating that this illness will *"cause an enhancement of the genetic pool"*.

WARSAW. On 28th February, in a wedding dress salon on John Paul II Avenue, two sales assistants openly discriminated against two female customers of Indonesian origin. They refused service to the customers based on their ethnic background. The sales assistants, totally without reason, concluded that the Asian women may infect them with COVID-19. The owner of the salon was called to the scene and he confirmed that the sales assistants would not serve customers from Indonesia. He allegedly insisted that both customers leave the store.

MARCH 2020

WÓLKA KOSOWSKA. In March, xenophobic comments appeared on the internet, accusing people living in Wólka Kosowska, a community near Warsaw, of spreading the coronavirus epidemic. Some of the comments also incited violence against them. Wólka Kosowska is home to a well-known trading centre with vendors who came from many countries, primarily from Vietnam. In actual fact, this multicultural community was the first in Poland to organise a system of special sanitary and warning procedures around COVID-19 many weeks before the pandemic reached Poland. One Polish **Twitter** user wrote: *‘Wólka Kosowska should be bombed and ploughed over, it has done so much harm, I think that it is protected by former members of WSI [military counterintelligence- translator’s note] – so far it is doing well and the fines are too low’*. Another Twitter user addressed **Dominik Tarczyński**, a Member of European Parliament representing the **Law and Justice** party with the following appeal: *‘Mr. Representative, I as someone who voted for you, want to ask you whether a place like Wólka Kosowska has been ploughed over or surrounded by a sanitary cordon? It is from places such as this that the plague began in Europe’*. Tarczyński himself has, in recent years, voiced numerous comments of a xenophobic nature, aimed at migrants. For example, on 16th April, he rebuked the Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi on Twitter, that two months previously she had encouraged visits to New York’s Chinatown. Earlier, on 11th March, he criticised Alexandra Cortasio-Cortez, a member of the House of Representatives from New York, for offering support to Chinese and Asian restaurants.

WROCLAW. On 1st March, during mass in the St. Michael Archangel church on Bolesław Prus Street, **Fr. Leonard Wilczyński**, belonging to the Salesian order, stated in his homily that the COVID-19 pandemic is *“God’s punishment for living in the sin of homosexuality”*. He also added that the Chinese were *“dirty”* and *“eat bats and dead fetuses”*. The public has not been informed whether the priest has faced any kind of consequences from church authorities in connection with this statement.

WARSAW. On 5th March, **Adam Gmurczyk**, the long-time leader of the extreme nationalist group, **Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski** (‘National Rebirth of Poland’) and editor of the antisemitic periodical, **Szczerbiec** (which shares its name with a historical mediaeval sword), published an image endorsing the use of the fascist salute on his **Twitter** profile. He encouraged his readers to greet one another using the *‘Roman salute’* gesture (which involves raising one’s hand in an identical manner to the infamous Nazi greeting). Gmurczyk and his group have been using every occasion for many years to spread ideology and symbols close to those of fascism, in this case using the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext.

WARSAW. On 6th March on Foksal Street, a group of young men and women shouted the word *“coronavirus”* in a sneering manner at three female students of Collegium Civitas university, all of whom were Vietnamese. Xenophobia manifested itself in this incident by attributing responsibility for the COVID-19 pandemic to all people of Asian origin. No bystanders reacted to the aggressive shouting.

WARSAW. On 6th March, a passenger on a train from Kołobrzeg to Kraków summoned health services because she was of the opinion that another traveller constituted a threat. She identified the Asiatic appearance of her fellow traveller as the primary source of her concern. Writer, Irek Grin, travelling on the same train noted: *“A certain lady called the police and health services because she decided in her own mind that a man of Asian features had coronavirus”*. The train was delayed for several hours at the Central Station in Warsaw, all cars were locked, passengers had their

identification checked by the police and railway security officers with dogs. The incident transpired to be a false alarm, stemming from fear around COVID-19 associated with people of Asian origin. Joanna Narożniak, spokesperson of the office of the Sanitary Inspector for the Mazovian Voivodship informed the press that the passenger who was the source of the woman's concern *"does not meet the clinical and epidemiological criteria which would qualify him to be in one of the risk groups"*. She added that epidemiological procedures concerning the man had been completed.

WROCLAW. On 8th March on Świdnicka Street, a group of assailants attacked a Chinese-born citizen of Poland to the point at which he lost consciousness. The men spat in the victim's face and felled him to the ground with their fists. *"Luckily, a passer-by quickly came to the aid of the man lying on the ground and began to help him, involving other people who happened to be nearby. My husband was hit straight in the face and was bleeding profusely. It's good that people came to his aid at once"* - said the wife of the victim. The man was taken to hospital. He has lived in Wrocław for twenty-five years and is a well-known chef. He had previously received an award from the Mayor of the city for promoting Wrocław as a place friendly to foreigners. On the internet, below articles reporting this attack many xenophobic comments were posted, including: *'The Chinaman deserved this because it was them who brought on this coronavirus. Why did he have to come here?'* His wife also reported other similarly motivated incidents experienced by her husband: *"Coronavirus seems to have deepened the hatred and aggression. Even now, when my husband takes the dog for a walk and people see him, they cross over to the opposite side of the street"*.

LEŻAJSK. On 9th March, the **Perła Hotel and Banquet Centre** posted the following message on its **Facebook** profile: *'In connection with the threat of the coronavirus pandemic, the Perła hotel has called off all single and group reservations for Hasids'*. One internet user brought to the hotel management's attention that this post *'is very awkward and smells of antisemitism. It suggests that it is the Hasids, and not all other guests that are carriers of the virus'*. In response, a representative of the hotel defended the comment and did not delete the bulletin from Facebook.

WARSAW. On 10th March on Polsat News TV, Daria Kwiecień, a journalist, in a conversation with Dr. Anna Tatar, representing the "NEVER AGAIN" Association, described a xenophobic incident which took place in an international nursery. Parents of Polish children demanded of the director of the institution that in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, *"teachers who have Asiatic features or come from Asia"* (and only these teachers) cease to continue their daily activity within the nursery.

WROCLAW. On 12th March, the Internet TV channel known as **NTV** hosted **Ewa Pawela** (who introduces herself as the *"whistle-blower of mind control"*, and is co-founder of the **Stop Organized Electronic Torture** association) voiced conspiracy theories pertaining to the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. She claimed that *"according to very serious scientific reports [...] there is no possibility for it to be a natural virus"*. She stated that *"traces of programming of that pathogen"* had been found, and that the virus *"has been produced in a laboratory, probably a military one with a very high degree of security"*, and that it was a *"biological weapons laboratory"*. Later in the discussion, Pawela referred with full respect to an *"authority"* (as she described him), namely the Russian biologist, **Igor Nikulin**, who *"in his interview for Russia Today in Arabic stated that the coronavirus is a biological weapon developed in order to reduce the population of our planet by ninety percent. He claims that the outbreaks of this infection point to the responsibility of the United States"*. Pawela added that it *"could also be Israel"*. Continuing on the same subject, she stated that *"it is possible to create an ethno-virus which will selectively infect members of a given nation with Arab or Jewish roots."* According to Pawela, *"since 1998, the Israelis have been trying to develop*

*such a biological weapon which would be targeted at and affect only Palestinians”, whilst stating that at the same time the USA ran a project which would encompass “all pathogens which would target some races, but spare others. And maybe this research is already so advanced that the US government felt it was ready to test it and try it out somewhere”. The recording of Pawela’s allegations was broadcast on **YouTube**, and had amassed a million and a half views by the beginning of May.*

SKAWINA. On 14th March, **Teresa Garland**, known as the chairperson of the **Provisional Council of the State of the Polish Nation - the Constitutional Social Committee**, who was also a candidate on the **Grzegorz Braun** slate in the Polish parliamentary elections in 2015, and a candidate herself in the 2020 presidential elections, shared her opinions on the COVID-19 pandemic. Her thoughts concerned both the global situation and in Poland, and included radical recommendations for the government: *“According to my knowledge, coronavirus is an extremely interesting move by globalists in the modern biological war, the aim of which I believe is to implement a New World Order. [...] And if this happens it is clear that Russia with China will introduce communism in southern Europe... In the meantime in Poland, with the help of German-American troops, the Jew-Americans will make sure that globalism is introduced in Poland... [...]Perhaps I will change my mind about the actions of the Morawiecki government if he issues an arrest warrant for anti-state elements and for the long arms of the globalists. in other words, I expect arrest warrants for all rectors of Polish universities (the majority of whom are apparently freemasons...), and arrest warrants for all members of the judiciary associations such as Iustitia or Themis, because it seems that the natural rights of Poles are being violated and the entire Polish nation is being exploited due to the laws created in Poland under the supervision of a number of legal or judicial associations, which in turn are controlled by Rothschild of Temple Bar in the City of London”.*

GDAŃSK. On 15th March, the management of student accommodation at a university in Gdańsk abruptly forced a student of Japanese origin to go into quarantine solely because the student had met with his own father, a university professor from Tokyo who was legally present in Poland. The decision of the superintendent was not justified by any procedure that bound students of Polish origin. The embassy of Japan intervened in the matter. As the father of the student wrote in a letter to the “NEVER AGAIN” Association, *‘it is difficult to understand such a decision in any way other than the simplified association of coronavirus with Asians’.*

KIEŁCZÓW. On 15th March, the Bzns.media page on Facebook (a news website based in Kiev) published a video in which two female migrants from Ukraine explained how they had been evicted from a workers’ hostel (no city name was given). The manager, citing new regulations connected with the COVID-19 epidemic, demanded that the women vacate the rented room immediately. Similar events occurred in many other hostels and hotels across Poland. Such an incident, amongst others, was reported by a woman from Kielczów in the county of Wrocław. The woman, who rented out rooms to Ukrainian workers, said: *“Recently, some hostels have told Ukrainians to leave within one day. I will not chase my tenants out because that would be inhumane. These are such times that they must rely on both themselves and on us”.*

WROCLAW. On 17th March, the former Catholic priest, **Jacek Międlar**, an activist of extreme right, mused over conspiracy theories about alleged plans to depopulate the human race by means of the COVID-19 pandemic in a programme broadcast by the **wPrawo.pl** portal. He used the term “*ecoterrorism*” multiple times referring to countries, organisations and activists concerned about the climate, stating that they support the push for *“depopulation, in other words bringing about in some way a reduction of world population”.* He compared them to **Adolf Hitler**,

and used derogatory terms to describe a well-known Swedish climate activist, referring to her as: “*emotionally pathological teenager, Greta Thunberg*” (by which he contemptuously alluded to sixteen-year-old Thunberg being diagnosed with Asperger’s syndrome). To conclude his argument, Międlar stated that “*those who publicly speak about the necessity to depopulate the human race [...] also identify themselves with ideologies such as LGBT, cultural Marxism, demoralisation of the community, and breaking the moral spine of young people by means of some internet junk or pop culture junk or trash from Hollywood on the screens. And, of course, we have to add all kinds of abortion and eugenics practices*”. During the programme, Międlar was wearing an antisemitic t-shirt, with the slogan, ‘*I do not apologise for Jedwabne*’ (Jedwabne is the town where in 1941, some Poles assisted in the massacre of their Jewish neighbours).

ŁUKÓW. On 19th March, three teenagers who were students at one of the local elementary schools attacked a fifty-nine-year-old Vietnamese resident of the town. They directed a number of insulting statements at her, including that she “*comes from China and has coronavirus*”, “*F.ck off you slut!*”, and “*Get the f.ck out of here, you whore, you f.cking Chinese woman!*”. The perpetrators hurled stones and litter at her, spat in her direction, and one of them pushed her. When the woman attempted to flee, the youths pursued her. The young assailants were aged ten to fourteen years. The police have conducted investigations into the case of insulting a person based on ethnicity and violation of physical integrity. A dossier of this case has been presented to the Family and Juvenile Department of the Regional Court in the town of Łuków. The victim has been living in Poland for twenty years.

WARSAW. On 21st March a number of antisemitic comments were posted below a video which featured the Israeli ambassador in Poland, Alexander Ben Zwi, on **Twitter**. The ambassador was informing Israeli citizens travelling in Poland about ways of getting back to their home country during the COVID-19 pandemic. In reaction to his statement, delivered in Hebrew, internet users posted, amongst others, the following comments (in Polish):

- ‘*When you leave, Poland will be rid of the worst virus*’
- ‘*Oh yes... get the f.ck out of here!*’
- ‘*God speed, you f.cking kikes*’
- ‘*Have a good one-way journey!*’
- ‘*Take with you ¾ of your people in our government*’
- ‘*One-way ticket...*’
- ‘*See you never again*’
- ‘*Paszoł won!!!*” [a derogatory phrase in Russian language used in Polish to chase off a dog – translator’s note],
- ‘*Never come back. Amen*’
- ‘*F.ck off, you cabalistic half-wit, together with them*’
- ‘*Finally, a sound decision, please don’t come back and take all of your compatriots with you*’
- ‘*And don’t you ever come back*’
- ‘*Let them also take Jews with Polish citizenship with them*’
- ‘*Let this be the end of your parasitic existence in Poland*’
- ‘*Raus home*’ [‘*Raus*’ is in German, a relic of Nazi occupation when soldiers yelled at people to get away – translator’s note].

Similar comments appeared on a host of media services and websites. For example, on **Facebook** in the **Poland Lawful and Just** group, the ambassador’s statement was commented on in the following manner:

- ‘*Get the f.ck out of Poland*’

- *'Let us help them leave, some should be reminded of their true last names, changed by their parents and grandparents'*
- *'Swine to go to their own'*
- *'And it could all be solved by itself. Sometimes even a virus brings measurable advantages'*
- *'F.ck off and never come back!!!'*
- *'As a mean Jew, he hurls toxin at Poles'*
- *'Corona has done some good'*
- *'Good riddance, go to your own home!'*
- *'Let them leave at last and stop constantly spitting at our country – one-way ticket'*
- *'It's high time, maybe the virus will help us to get rid of them'*
- *'May it be as quick as possible, get the hell out of Poland'*
- *'They will come back for compensation'*
- *'I can help to expedite them effectively, my strength is in my leg'*
- *'Poland has waited for this for a thousand years - at last only we on our own'*
- *'I am all for it and never come back here, you are not welcome here, parasites and slanderers'.*

The ambassador's statement was also commented on by **Wojciech Sumliński**, an investigative journalist and columnist. On 29th March, in a conversation broadcast on **YouTube** on the **wRealu24** channel, he sneeringly said: *"Only rarely do I agree with the Israeli ambassador! I think that this is an excellent idea that Jews really return to their fatherland!"*

BYDGOSZCZ. On 22nd March, **Prelate Roman Kneblewski**, a senior parish priest of the Roman Catholic Parish dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, published a post on **Facebook** in which he mocked the COVID-19 victims in Italy. The clergyman, who is popular amongst those on the extreme right, is known for supporting the so-called Independence March, and for his xenophobic and homophobic statements, posted the following words: *"Since about 52,000 people die in Italy every month for various reasons, could the additional (or not, because it is not known) 5,000 have caused a disaster, a «state of war» or paralysis of the state and health service? Was it necessary to call on the army to form convoys with the dead for these additional 5,000? Why this circus? What's this all about? This is absurd"*. Kneblewski in other posts also questioned the ordinances introduced in connection with the COVID-19 epidemic. On the same day (22nd March), he thanked his parishioners for their physical participation in the Easter mass that took place in his church, which was contrary to the guidelines established during the Conference of Polish Bishops. He posted on Facebook: *"Dear all, you did not disappoint. You did not let yourself be fooled, intimidated, you did not succumb to psychosis and did not fall into hysteria. As usual, as befitting Catholics, you received Holy Communion in large numbers"*. In addition, on 20th April, Kneblewski shared an article on Facebook titled, *If not for quarantine, the epidemic would have ended a long time ago*, and accompanied it with the words: *'The voice of scientific authority'*. Moreover, Kneblewski wrote a number of social media posts supporting statements made by the anti-vaccine movement. For example, on 21st April on Twitter, he referred to a conspiracy theory on epidemics, and warned against wearing masks (the obligation to cover the nose and mouth was introduced in Poland on 16th April), because it would cause lung disease: *"It might be that the developers of coronavirus know all this very well and want to, by whatever means, cause people to lose health and have to then ask Bill Gates for vaccines. In this way, Bill Gates will achieve his plan: depopulation through forced vaccination"*. On 25th April, he posted the following comment on **Twitter**: *"Forced vaccination amounts to breeding people like cattle..."* along with graphics by **Ben Garrison**, an American cartoonist popular amongst the far-right in the USA (many of his drawings have antisemitic, racist and anti-Muslim content, and he also opposes vaccination).

LUBLIN. On 22nd March, a candidate in the upcoming presidential election, professor at the Catholic University of Lublin, and former member of the European Parliament, **Mirosław Piotrowski**, who is associated with **Radio Maryja**, voiced doubts on his website as to the real threat from the COVID-19 pandemic, and suggested the existence of dishonesty in line with conspiracy theories which are popular in the extreme right community, adding his own film analogy: *‘The question is: how long can one govern when [...] fears are found to be exaggerated? In searching for an answer in our minds we can go back to the plot of the film, Seksmisja directed by Juliusz Machulski, thirty-seven years ago. The main characters, Maksio and Albercik, after several decades of hibernation wake up underground in a world inhabited only by women, who do not venture outside due to contamination posing a threat to life. They soon find out that the radioactive pollution of the Earth is a lie, and Her Excellency is a man posing as a woman, and moreover, one who thinks soberly. After discovering the truth, in other words, that there is no danger, he has no intention of making the women aware of it, stating that since they had already decided to live underground, there is no point in leading them out of that error. So much so because when they feel a threat, they are easier to govern. Thus, one may wonder whether the coronavirus threat should be found to be otherwise harmless, will we be informed about this honestly or, like Her Excellency, our rulers will continue as long as it’s possible, to keep up the veil of an active virus pollution, thus camouflaging the exits and blocking the elevator leading to freedom by a secret code? In that case, we would need a specific «Coronavirusmission» which will set us free’.*

WARSAW. On 23rd March, in an interview for the Onet portal, a man of Mongolian origin who has lived in Poland for twenty-three years (since childhood) described xenophobic incidents aimed at him and those close to him, in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. He said: *“People shout when they see my family: «oh, there goes coronavirus!» [...] When it was still possible to go outside normally and the epidemic was already rife in the world, I noticed more unfriendly and suspicious looks from people in the streets than usual. On public transport, the seat next to me remained empty, regardless of how crowded it was. I also notice that people on social media have no problem with writing that «yellowfaces spread diseases»”. The man also recalled other examples of xenophobic behaviour that he had experienced. For example, in one of Warsaw’s clubs he was harassed by several of his fellow customers because of his Asiatic features. Moreover, in a conversation with a journalist from Onet, he told her: “It’s a regular occurrence that someone reminds me about my being different. I often hear: «you are not at home here» which is meant to shut my mouth”.*

WARSAW. On 24th March, the **Nacjonalista.pl** portal, which is connected with the neo-fascist **National Rebirth of Poland** (NOP), published an article by Russian extreme rightist ideologue, **Alexander Dugin** which joyously welcomed the COVID-19 pandemic, because according to him, *‘the coronavirus epidemic represents the end of globalisation’.* The editorial board of Nacjonalista.pl added its own view: *‘All nations must fight together against globalism, Zionism and liberalism. These plagues must be annihilated’.* This is not the first time that the NOP has expressed its fascination with foreign ideologues of fascism and fantasies about the destruction of the democratic world.

SOSNOWIEC. On 25th March, on Będzińska Street, three men attacked a female of Chinese descent – a scientific worker of the Silesian University. The victim said: *“They surrounded me; I was so afraid - even now I am trembling. They kept shouting «virus» and «China»”. She also added: “They wanted to intimidate me, so that I would be afraid of living here. They wanted to make me afraid of leaving my home, because I am getting this kind of treatment every day. I do not feel safe here as a woman of Chinese descent.”* The motivation of her assailants was connected with

the COVID-19 pandemic and the popularised notion that the ‘fault’ for the spread of the disease is borne by the Chinese, as well as other people of Asian origin.

WARSAW. On 25th March, in an interview broadcast by **YouTube** on the **wRealu24** channel, one of the leaders of the Polish extreme right and former Catholic priest, **Jacek Międlar** voiced conspiracy theories connected with the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated: *“There also appears such a theory that this coronavirus is a part of the plan for depopulation, about which Prince Charles spoke [...], about which Dennis Meadows, a member of the masonic lodge from Rome, spoke [an error in Międlar’s words – it was a member of the Club of Rome, an international organisation grouping experts of many fields, which works on global problems – translator’s note], whose interview was published in 1979 in the «Kultura» periodical. Meadows says: for instance, when it concerns Poland, I think that your birth rate is too high, a population of fifteen million would guarantee a balance. [...] Taking into consideration the statement by Prince Charles, Meadows and also Bill Gates [...] let’s put these statements together with the ideology of ecoterrorists, in other words the battle for climate, with so-called global warming [...] – their common denominator is the realisation of the ideology of ecoterrorism. [...] It really boils down to such a speculation that coronavirus may be used to carry out depopulation of the human race, and it may prove to be quite realistic, absolutely”*.

POLAND. On 27th March, a video appeared on **YouTube** titled **A Tale about the Coronavirus** – one designed for children which contained xenophobic overtones. The animated character represented a stereotypical Chinese man wearing supposedly traditional headgear, who in a kitchen full of dirty dishes and cockroaches on the wall was eating a soup cooked from bats. The words of this tale, read by a professional narrator, strengthened the visual message – in the video it was stated, for example, that the Chinese man collected *“in his kitchen clusters of viruses”*. He was also blamed for the rise of COVID-19, because he did not *“fully cook”* the bat soup and fell ill, causing the pandemic. One internet user addressed the authors of the video (text and animation by Maciej Wiczorek from Perpetuum Studio and illustrations by the **Szerszy Kadr Foundation**) with a request to correct the fragment of the video which contained the xenophobic message. Replying to this, a representative of the Szerszy Kadr Foundation described the viewer’s reservations as a ‘joke’, ‘total madness and a misunderstanding’, and also refused to make any changes to the video.

WARSAW. On 27th March, the **wPolityce.pl** portal published an article by **Jacek Matysiak**, a Polish émigré activist living in the US, on the subject of the COVID-19 pandemic and the epidemiological situation in various countries. In his text the author included the following statement: *‘The only hope remaining is that this horrid virus attacks Israel more acutely, then it will be accused of antisemitism and thus it will be its undoing...’* Matysiak also propagated conspiracy theories in which he accused China of reaping benefits from the global effects of the pandemic. On 11th April, in an article published on the **wPrawo.pl** portal (run by the former priest, **Jacek Międlar**, who sympathises with ideologies close to fascism), he stated, amongst other things, that: *‘The act of «liberating» many countries of medical accessory equipment, essential to combatting the epidemic seems to be driven, coordinated and likely to be carried out by Chinese agents’*. He also insulted the General Director of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, writing: *‘The Ethiopian leftie boss negated the existence of the pandemic and had nothing against the spread of the latest mutation of Coronavirus across the entire world’*.

WARSAW. On 27th March, during an interview broadcast by the **wRealu24** channel on **YouTube**, **Dr. Ewa Kurek**, a graduate of history at the Lublin Catholic University and book author, who is known for her appearances on **Polish State Television (TVP)** and **Radio Maryja**, uttered

statements that were antisemitic in character. She referred to the recent announcement by the Israeli Ambassador in Poland, Alexander Ben-Zvi, who had informed Israeli citizens travelling in Poland about the possibilities of returning to their country, in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated: *“What kind of person is a Zionist? It’s a Jew who for another Jew’s money sends a third Jew to Israel. [...] To us Poles, it’s no problem - it’s better that everyone stays in their own place. Six hundred years ago King Casimir the Great invited them, so let only those who feel they are Polish citizens stay in Poland. And those who do not bind their lives and emotions with Poland, please yourselves - it’s better you leave”*. Later on in the same programme, Kurek spoke about a phenomenon which she described as the *“Judaisation of Europe”*, which she tied to the COVID-19 pandemic: *“I notice something else that is connected with Jews, I would call it the «Judaisation of Western Europe» [...]. In Spain it was decided that they would make [...] selections, because the number of respirators is insufficient to meet the needs of everyone, so respirators will only be for younger, more valuable people. This is appalling. In this case, we have to do with something taken directly from Jewish law and used in Europe. [...] Suddenly, with my own eyes I saw that this Jewish law is being introduced into our Western Christian civilisation, For God’s sake, people, think of what you’re doing!”* She also added: *“In this Western Europe, which, after all, is falling to pieces, in this situation of threat, we see a domination of a conglomerate of Judaisation, in other words allowing the selection of people: who is to live and who is to die. In our civilisation this was unacceptable [...], it was only incumbent on the Jews”*. Kurek also stated: *“And now this fascist-Jewish, Judaistic behaviour is seen in Western Europe”*. She emphasised that in the case of Western Europe, predominantly France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Spain *“it is appalling that they are unable to deal with this pandemic, and equally appalling is the Judaisation and development of fascism in those people’s mentality”*. Later in the programme Kurek, when asked by the interviewer, **Piotr Szlachetowicz** about the *“Judaisation of Europe”*, said: *“This is the cultural code of the Jews”*. He also asked about her thoughts on the *“Jewish manipulation of history”*, specifically about the events of World War II. In response, she stated that *“One hundred and fifty thousand Jews fought on **Hitler’s** side, and the world doesn’t know it. Jews have adopted a principle that Jews may not be criticised”*.

POZNAŃ. On 28th March, the popular rap artist **Gandi Ganda** (real name **Piotr Mięzał**) disseminated conspiracy theories on his **Facebook** profile, accusing the Chinese of creating the COVID-19 pandemic intentionally. The musician stated: *“And what if the present situation is the result of actions by the Chinese regime which decided that a «third world war» should break out and take over economic supervision in a manner that doesn’t leave anything to illusion? [...] They could have cultivated that virus which was found to be a shot right on the mark, and then create a performance for the entire world”*. He also added: *“And when Europe and the United States are being submerged in chaos and are sentencing their economies to a nonentity, the Chinese at the same time are promoting themselves as heroes who can expertly deal with the virus and now are willing to help others. From their perspective, it’s a tactical masterpiece, from ours it’s a total flop and in consequence a catastrophe much greater than a «pandemic»”*. Towards the end of March, Gandi Ganda posted a declaration of support on his Facebook profile for **Krzysztof Bosak**, the **Confederation** party Member of Parliament who is running in the 2020 Polish presidential election.

WARSAW. On 28th March, employees of municipal services in a housing estate, who were carrying out work on a manhole shouted the insult, *“coronavirus!”* at a woman and her son who were passing by. The reason for this transpired to be the Asiatic features of their faces. The wronged woman informed the “NEVER AGAIN” Association about this incident. She also informed the association of another xenophobic incident: *“An elderly woman outside the post office building called us «żółtki» [a Polish word meaning “yellow-face”, used in a derisive way against people from Asia – translator’s note]. We are Polish citizens, I work here every day and live in Warsaw, I*

pay taxes here and I engage in volunteer work, but because of such behaviour by adults I am uneasy about the safety of my son. He was born in Poland and regards himself as a Pole with all given rights, but he has my Asiatic facial features”.

WARSAW. On 30th March, **Media Narodowe**, an extreme right-wing portal, connected with the **Confederation** party, disseminated information on its website and on **Twitter**, alleging that in Italy, people identified as Roma (derisively referred to as ‘gypsies’ in the article) had illegally occupied the apartments of mainly elderly COVID-19 hospital patients. In the press release, generalised and stigmatising expressions were used, aimed at inciting animosity towards representatives of the Roma community, including the title of the article: *‘Italy: Gypsies are illegally occupying apartments of elderly people who have been taken to a hospital’*, *“Scandalous practices of Gypsies in Italy”*, and *“Internet users are indignant at the criminal activity of Gypsies”*. The response to the article on Twitter included extreme racist and violence-inciting comments, including: *“Enter the Carabinieri, handcuffs, prison cell. If not, paid Mafiosi shooting from every barrel”*, and one Twitter user posted an animation depicting a man firing a flame thrower.

LUBLIN. On 31st of March a radical right-wing **YouTube** channel **Idź Pod Prąd** (‘Go Against the Tide’) broadcast an episode titled *‘WHO shares the responsibility for the outbreak of the Chinese virus!’* In their conversation, host **Eunika Chojecka** together with her interlocutor pastor **Paweł Chojecki** (leader of the religious group known as **Kościół Nowego Przymierza** [‘Church of the New Covenant’]) preached conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 pandemic. At the beginning of the broadcast, Chojecka stated that *“The World Health Organisation has infected the whole world”*. In turn pastor Chojecki described COVID-19 as a biological weapon, stating afterwards: *“The communist China with all globalist saboteurs, the so-called leftists around the world, have perfectly prepared themselves for the biological weapon attack. [...] Exactly the same operation was carried out in Wuhan. Once thousands of people became infected, the Chinese communist party let around eight million people into Wuhan to get infected and later spread the virus all over the world. [...] Chinese communists took over the World Health Organisation. [...] Our health minister did not prepare us for this biological attack”*. Later in his argument, Paweł Chojecki accused the World Health Organization of genocide: *“The communist conspiracy began way before. [...] The UN was precisely created with the participation of Russian and Chinese communists, who were then given very important places in the permanent council. And now China, not the Western world, has taken over this entire organisation, and certainly WHO. [...] An organisation that was supposed to guard the whole world, committed a crime of genocide instead”*. Chojecki also presented an extreme conspiracy vision of the omnipresent Chinese ‘eye’, which is allegedly in control of various fields in Poland: *“Why is nobody talking about the presence of the Chinese army at the military academy in Warsaw? [...] Everyone knows that. Wherever you look – whether at the Health Organisation or at the Polish military academy, there are communist spies everywhere”*.

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POLAND. In March and April, during the COVID-19 epidemic, a large number of posts were observed on social media containing conspiracy theories, as well as expressing hatred towards Chinese people and people from the continent of Asia more generally. Here is a selection of the comments posted on Polish **Twitter**:

- *‘Again, these Chinks will devour dogs, bats and all kinds of horrible things, and in a moment, something will again cause a big fart. They are savages, the whole world is suffering because of them’*

- *‘Damned Chinks... they should be disposed of. You’ve destroyed everything and you still want more!’* - *‘Because SARS and MERS are animal viruses, while Chinks are whores who eat everything*

that comes close, often raw. This is why, amongst other things, I can't stand them and nobody will convince me that they did not contribute to this epidemic in a more or less natural way'

- 'So, we'll not even get a grip on ourselves yet and we won't have the time to mourn the victims of one tragedy when those Chinks will present us with a new one. Close the borders to them, let them destroy themselves. What kind of a nation are they? Terrible barbarism. Are you going to enjoy the taste of a dog in their restaurants?'

- 'The yellow-faces are also sorting telephones, although they won't tell the truth, that's a fact, because it's an exceptionally strange country. It's certain that pharmaceutical companies are making a profit on it, they must have had such a plan and there again, they eat dogs, those Chinks, what swine they are'

- 'Those Chinks some two thousand years ago – that was culture... but today they are slobs and poisoners'

- 'And maybe those yellow-faces wanted to dominate the world???'

- 'We will not allow yellow-faces or Muslims to have their way in Poland!!'

- 'Nations of the world, thank the Chinks for f.cking the world to pieces. Thank you, yellow-faces. Send those Chinks back to their rice fields and never again let them in to the civilised world. Scram!'

- 'F.ck me pink, I hope these yellow-faces will be annihilated to f.cking hell'

- 'You f.cking yellow-faces, you'd better find something to combat this shit that you created yourselves or else I will walk around and cough at every Chink I meet in the street'

- 'They should drop the atom bomb on them, no kidding'

- 'The Chink government, as well as the majority of people there should be disposed of. Those skin-eaters thought that they would play that virus quietly, like some time ago the Ruskies did with Chernobyl'

- 'If the Chinks knew about the epidemic at home earlier and hid it from the rest of the world and sent out infected people to Europe and the world, they should answer for that, those s.o.b's. Let's put an end to trade, diplomacy, and transfer of companies. Punish those shitfaces!!! F.cking yellowfaces!!!'

- 'Because the world consists of people and Chinks. Simply animals. Yellowfaces are not human'

- 'Coronavirus is the ideal disease. The mortality rate is not too high, but its rate of spread allows it to block the entire system of health care. And this evokes panic. Those Chinks have configured it well'

- 'A prophecy says that Poland will save the world from the yellow plague and total annihilation of mankind. We will then become the most powerful nation'

- 'Man, understand that the virus was manufactured in a Chinese soap factory. In Germany and Italy, they bought out all the soap because they are sluts and had no soap at home. Poles have soap. So why do we have the virus?'

- 'Life during the Coronavirus epidemic is like a Chinese man – zero morality, everyone cares only for himself and it's better to stay at home'

- one internet user also attached a photo inciting violence – it depicted a man aiming a pistol with the caption: 'Japs, Chinks'.

Some posts on Twitter were simultaneously offensive to the Chinese and Jews, for example:

- 'Chinks are apt to do better underhand business than the Jews'

- 'The vaccination has been here for a long time, it's impossible otherwise. Jews or Chinks are certain to have it, but it's accessible only to a chosen few'

- 'Jews can't be trusted and Law and Justice are jews [writing 'jews' with a lowercase 'j' is a deliberate mark of contempt – translator's note]... and let's add that it is probable that the virus is a deliberate act by Chinese commies in secret agreement with governments such as Law and Justice, aimed at taking over banks and industrial institutions!'

- *'IMHO: Those cowboys with sidelocks dumped a cuckoo egg on the yellow-faces for a known reason, and lo and behold, one big flop! – The stink ricocheted back to its fold... For now, the project is developing in accordance with the wishes of its authors – what do they do not to allow it to exceed the critical point and to not reach them...?'*
- *'Why put up a wall, it's enough to impose a «quarantine» on the Chinese. First, they sold it to us and now they're making dough on it! Those yellowfaces are better at it than Jewboys!'*

Moreover, some posts managed to simultaneously insult both the Chinese and those of African origin, for example:

- *'White people are being mass slaughtered in the RSA. Chinks are effective because they don't play around with human or gay rights, but Blacks see what is going on and already voices can be heard that the white man was a better master'*
- *'The Chinks have infected half the world, most probably resorting to fraud and now, f.ck it all, making money on facemasks and respirators. I would force them to face a tribunal. This chief of the WHO is also a better conman. Ethiopian commie.'*

POLAND. In March and April in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of antisemitic conspiracy theories were posted online. Their authors attributed the intentional spread of the new virus to Jews, accusing them of reaping profit from the pandemic. Here are some selected comments posted on **Twitter**:

- *'We already know that the WHO is playing not under the baton of the Chinese, but that of the Jews. They want to paralyse Europe's economy and then Jews will finish up the destruction of the European Union. Later, the World Bank will give the funds, and all that will travel to their pockets. There will come about a depopulation and change of the population in Europe to Asians and Africans'*
- *'Jews were looking for a biological weapon against the Palestinians. Something went a bit wrong because they have genes similar to those of Palestinians. If the Palestinians were destroyed, the Jews would die together with them'*
- *'Some 2 years ago the Jews were engaged in massive genetic studies in Israel. Everybody laughed that it was to assess the amount of Jew in a Jew. Perhaps they planned to create a virus with a genetic restriction'*
- *'Soon the Jews will think up an immediate vaccine for a pseudo-coronavirus. And cash will flow, as well as a flock of sheep free of charge to test the vaccine on'*
- *'Again, those Jewish lies about a «Chinese virus»... Even without them everyone knows already that the virus comes from a Jewish laboratory in the USA. Jews keep on thinking that propaganda still acts like it did during Soviet times'*
- *'It's worth checking out: 7 children in Senegal died after getting an experimental COVID-19 vaccine. WHO is a masonic elite murdering mankind, participating in murdering children, Jews get the f.ck out of the government'*
- *'Next year, the Jews will launch a flow of loans to all governments willing to put an end to the economic crisis caused by the virus which they spread themselves. And we will continue to pay back those shekels for two generations. That's what they call it'*
- *'Maybe this killing of the Polish economy under the pretext of combatting coronavirus is intentional. When Ukraine went bankrupt, Jews took over the bankruptcy estate for next to nothing. Looking at all the actions of those ruling Poland with regard to the Jewish claims, such an intention would not be surprising'*
- *'First they think up the coronavirus which doesn't exist to instil fear in to the community, they make us wear facemasks which don't help, now some kind of vaccines, which will be pounced upon by people like crazy, while the wealthy Jew stands aside with stoic peace and counts the money.'*

POLAND. In March and April, during the coronavirus pandemic, a large number of comments were posted on social media which can be deemed offensive to Ukrainians. Below is a selection of comments posted on **Twitter** in Poland:

- *'One good thing: I was told that the Ukrainians are leaving our country in droves'*
- *'They say that the Ukrainians are going home, but why there are still so many of them in my town?'*
- *'We should never let them back! This is an invasion. Warsaw looks like Kiev now, when I go home on public transport, most of the passengers are Ukrainians, it's shocking'*
- *'I'm so happy they're leaving. The fewer Ukrainians, the better for Poles. Especially considering that 300,000 Poles have just returned home'*
- *'Go home, you trash!'*
- *'They should stay in Ukraine'*
- *'Do the Ukrainians have special rights in Poland? To get COVID and spread it in Ukraine? I hope they do. Good riddance'*
- *'They should be dead'*
- *'I was told that personal protective equipment will go first to the Ukrainians who don't pay their taxes. That's confirmed'*

One internet user posted an offensive comment towards Nobel prize winner, Olga Tokarczuk: *'You're not Polish. You're a guest here and in my city, so behave yourself. If you don't like it, go to Germany. They accept all the coloured ones. If you had a shred of dignity, you'd be helping your compatriots, the Ukrainians'*.

Some comments were both anti-Ukrainian and antisemitic:

- *'I see this virus has a cleansing effect. The Ukrainians are leaving, the Jews are leaving'*
- *'Ukrainians and Israeli Jews will replace the Poles. This is already going on. Unfortunately'*

POLAND. In March and in successive months a number of hateful and xenophobic comments appeared on the internet referring to Italians, with reference to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here is a selection of the posts observed on Polish **Twitter**:

- *'Haha, those Italians are cute, singing on their balconies. Because of these irresponsible morons the virus has spread to the rest of Europe, let's stop admiring these idiots'*
- *'How long has it been going on with those Italians? And zero effect... Unless they are deliberately lying and pushing their economy down the drain to blame it on the virus... It hasn't looked bright lately with their financial situation'*
- *'This virus will partially cure Italians of their arrogance, ignorance and stupidity. But this is an EXPENSIVE lesson in humility'*

Some of the posts were also of racist character and targeted at people from other countries:

- *'I wondered what the Chinese, Italians and Iranians have in common. What kind of genetic trait which could attract this coronavirus? That trait is black hair. Jet black. Question to genetics specialists: Is it possible to develop a virus targeted at those who have black hair? This is interesting how it is with the coronavirus in Poland'*
- *'I am asking you... POLES + to immediately GET OUT OF THE GERMAN UNION + in a time of crisis + it can be seen, that the UNION is up to shit + the WEST IS TOTALLY CORRUPT + during the crisis it is seen that the Union is NOT NEEDED by the Slavs! The virus is devouring Spaniards and Italians + because they are black *SLUTS* WE = SLAVS!!'* (the post was riddled with spelling mistakes in the Polish original).

POLAND. In March and in successive months a number of comments appeared on social media expressing aversion towards Germans in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some examples of comments posted on Polish **Twitter**:

- *'Germany should stop lying to Europe about coronavirus, every Pole who goes there and comes back is infected with the German virus. It's a lie that he was lucky enough to meet only one of those 500 infected people in this country of 80 million inhabitants. Everyone says that they are the main source of the virus'*
- *'Because it's a clever virus. It knew that in Poland it must wait its turn, until it gets a dignified welcome from the authorities. But I would have never suspected that Germany would give us the virus'*
- *'The Germans AT LAST have their own East Pomerania, Greater Poland and Silesia [regions in Poland – translator's note]. So, what was the reason for all those wars when one virus does the job?'*
- commenting on the allegation that Germany will falsify data on mortality numbers due to COVID-19: *'Germany has long standing experience in this field. In concentration camps people most frequently «died» of heart failure'*
- *'Germany: The threat of coronavirus in Heidelberg: an infected man applying for political asylum brought the deadly virus! «Thanks» to open borders!'* This post was accompanied by graphics depicting a black man against a background of COVID-19 virus particles, magnified by a microscope.

WARSAW. In March and April, the internet forum of the ultra-Catholic internet portal, **Frona.pl** became a medium for the widespread sharing of bizarre conspiracy theories pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here is a selection of such posts:

- *'The intellectually weakest individuals (in other words, common idiots) will run to be vaccinated, and by doing this will annihilate themselves'*. This comment related to a thread titled, *'Maybe there is some positive effect of the Coronavirus pandemic'*
- *'The virus from Wuhan was designed by the Chinese Communists in order to destroy the free world'*. This comment appeared on a thread titled: *'The Vatican: Covid-19 is an occasion to... strengthen globalisation?'*
- *'World public opinion can boldly blame God for this pandemic; it's God that brought this pandemic on us as punishment for sins such as LGBT, gender, homosexuality, etc. However, as usually happens with God's punishments, the wrong people get punished'*. This comment appeared on a thread titled: *'World public opinion demands investigation of the pandemic origin'*
- *'All of us are preoccupied with coronavirus, while Bergoglio [Pope Francis, who is scorned by Catholic fundamentalists – translator's note] in his homilies, scrupulously presented by the Vatican News, keeps on promoting the masonic programme of sustainable development of the UN Agenda 2030; in various configurations and scenes, on every occasion'*. This comment was posted on a thread titled: *'Bill Gates: the Catholic religion could be permanently suspended'*
- *'So, it looks like it's the Chinese and not Bill Gates who want to inoculate people worldwide with a vaccine containing a chip, and use this occasion to rip countries off by 10 billion dollars? Are the American paedophile lefties moulding the people and covering their tracks?'* and *'The intelligence service should check whether tourists were lured to the city of Wuhan by discounted fares, whether such discounts were offered in earlier years, which citizens and how far they were accommodated from the epicentre of the infection, did tour guides lead people and encourage to see places with the highest infection rates, what were tourists fed and where did the food come from (green salads), and whether important people, the highest state elites are vaccinated against coronavirus etc. Maybe the plan was to infect tourists and to spread the disease to other countries in order to weaken their economies'*. These comments appeared below an article titled: *'The Chinese Offensive. How Beijing is Using the Pandemic'*.

MASZKOWICE. On 1st April, the Polish Ombudsman for Human Rights, Dr. Adam Bodnar, appealed at the request of a representative of the local Roma community, to the administrator of

Łącko, a subdivision in the county of Nowy Sacz, for assistance in getting essential support from the local government to the inhabitants of a Roma settlement in connection with the COVID-19 epidemic. The ombudsman emphasised in his letter: *'The threat to health and safety in this district is currently especially high, if only because of the housing conditions prevailing there, the lack of access to a sewage system and in the case of some houses, even a lack of running water. Amongst the inhabitants, there are people of very advanced age and some who are chronically ill, in whose case infection by coronavirus is particularly dangerous'*. He also added: *'The representative of the Roma community has also drawn my attention to the problem of access to education for children living in that community, as the result of the suspension of functioning of education centres and the introduction of remote education. On the basis of information passed on to me, I doubt if the young inhabitants of the settlement are able to access such education, if they receive essential material regularly from the school to learn, and if the school involves assistants of Roma education to a sufficient degree in the education process'*. In his response to the appeal by the ombudsman, the administrator of the Łącko subdivision stated that the *'safety of inhabitants, both of the settlement, as well as of the entire region is a top priority, and of all subordinate institutions and units'*. He added: *'With regards the question raised of possible provision of disinfectant and personal care items to inhabitants (of whom I assume live in our region), I am pleased to inform you that the inhabitants are acquiring these on their own'*.

PRUSZCZ GDAŃSKI. On 1st April, the popular portal **Demotywatory.pl** published a fake photograph, disseminating a conspiracy theory, which was made to resemble an authentic image from CNN television: it depicted an official ceremony with the participation of people with Asiatic features, captioned: *'China apologises for the coronavirus epidemic'*. Numerous racist comments appeared in response to the image, including: *'This scabby slitty-eyed nation should pay dearly for this to the entire world'*, *'Would the Chinese obligate themselves to pay for what they had done? Not a chance'*, and *'Now, by the way, the chinese [beginning the word with lowercase 'c', to make it appear more derogatory – translator's note] are themselves like viruses and pests'*.

SYDNEY (AUSTRALIA). On 1st April, **Bogumił Drozdowski**, poet and actor, published a xenophobic poem, titled *Chinese Fiancée* on **Puls Polonii** ('Pulse of Polish Diaspora'), a popular internet portal of the Polish community in Sydney, Australia. In the poem he used stereotypical slurs, identifying the virus with everything that is Chinese. He also scoffed at elements of Chinese culture and humiliated people with Chinese roots. He wrote, amongst other things: *'Is it a HE or a SHE? The gender is undefined. Slitty-eyed świrus'* (a Polish play on words meaning virus and crazy), *'She got bored with ping pong and sweet and sour sauce. Like the Golden Fleet 500 years ago, she set out to conquer the world'*, and *'Chopsticks in your hand, I'll teach you to eat loudly, I'll murmur the song about the great Mao'*. He ended the poem with the following words: *'Don't you really understand who is most important in today's world? It's me - Corona, the Chinese fiancée to all'*.

WARSAW. On 2nd April, a news broadcast on the state television channel, **TVP1** accused the residents of refugee camps in Greece of spreading COVID-19. The report related to the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union in Luxembourg given on 2nd April, according to which Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary had failed to fulfil their obligations under EU law by refusing to comply with the temporary mechanism for the relocation of refugees which was established by the EU Council in 2015 in response to the migration crisis. The TVP material was riddled with manipulation and adulteration, and used the judgment of the ECJ as a pretext to present refugees as an epidemiological threat, as well as once again associating them with the *'Muslim terrorists'* responsible for attacks in Europe. Since 2015 this notion has been ever-present on the airwaves of state-owned television. **Maciej Sawicki**, co-presenter of the report, said: *"Coronavirus*

has been found in a Greek refugee camp. As many as twenty immigrants from the Middle East are infected. [...] Local residents are full of fear because there are many escapes from the camp, and the situation in Greece is getting worse. And yet the judgment of the ECJ leaves no doubt: the safety of the local community is less important than EU regulations”. The programme suggested that the decision of the EU authorities would impose the obligation to immediately accept a certain number of refugees on Poland, despite the ongoing epidemic. In actual fact, the relocation programme ended in 2017. In addition, clusters of images were presented, without any details as to where and when they had been obtained. The images presented groups of refugees carrying large amounts of luggage, crowding at the Turkish border behind barbed wire, or dark-skinned people being guarded by policemen, and women in hijabs. The images were combined with snapshots of terrorist attacks, and served to strengthen the xenophobic tone of the report. However, it was not mentioned that the squalid conditions in the refugee camps—above all their overcrowding and lack of any medical care—had served to increase the risk of an epidemic. In the face of this critical situation, at the end of March 2020, international humanitarian organisations called for immediate action.

GDAŃSK. On 3rd April, the Human Rights Ombudsman, Dr. Adam Bodnar, addressed an appeal to the mayors of Gdańsk, Poznań, and Wrocław to *‘immediately undertake all possible prophylactic action regarding the Roma people, which would allow us to lessen the risk of infection [by COVID-19 – translator’s note]’*. He also asked the mayors about the support offered to date for the Roma community, in addition to a question on the supply of disinfectants and sanitary items, as well as the situation of Roma school students. In response to this appeal by Adam Bodnar, on 13th April, the daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* published an article describing the extremely poor conditions prevailing in the Osowa settlement, which is populated by Roma people and lacks substantive help from the authorities in Gdańsk. The author of the article, Anna Dobiegała described how the Roma community—a population of approximately sixty people (of which half are children)—has access to only a single toilet. She added: *‘From the day of the announcement of the state of epidemic in Poland, the social worker of the Municipal Centre for Family Help in Gdańsk stopped appearing on Wenus Street in that settlement. Every second day he calls the Roma community on the phone, and asks if everything is OK. The children there have no access to the internet or computers, and endure unsuitable living conditions to participate in remote education. On the day the schools were closed, Roma children were deprived overnight of the possibility of education. The area has no doctor, and facemasks were supplied by Roman Nowicki [until the end of 2019, Assistant to Roma families in Gdańsk. As of January 1st 2020, the city does not employ anyone in that capacity – translator’s note]. On site he took everyone’s temperature. The Municipal Centre for Family Support did not supply the Roma people with disinfectant, no other portable toilet appeared there, and the inhabitants still do not have access to water – they use a hydrant from the street’*. As the reporter of *Gazeta Wyborcza* wrote, food parcels are practically the sole form of help the Roma people have received during the COVID-19 epidemic. After the media raised the issue, officials supplied the Osowa settlement with liquid disinfectant, gloves, and face masks.

WARSAW. On 3rd April, **Fr. Sławomir Abramowski**, the parish priest of the St. John Paul II church in the district of Bemowo, published a post on **Facebook** in which he indicated *‘how much good happened in Europe thanks to the [COVID 19 – translator’s note] disease’*. Amongst the positive aspects of the pandemic he mentioned the lack of marches for the rights of sexual minorities. Abramowski accused the marches’ organisers of spreading COVID-19: *‘There are no gay parades now. It will be a long time before they return to Spain, because it was just such a demonstration by thousands of «genderists» disregarding the epidemic that became a biological bomb spreading the plague in Madrid’*.

BERLIN. On 4th April, the Polish state television TVP correspondent in Germany, **Cezary Gmyz** shared a post on his **Twitter** account, accusing Muslims in Berlin of gathering outside a mosque – an act which could cause COVID-19 to spread. The post originated from the account of the far right party **AfD**. The material posted by Gmyz sparked a wave of anti-Islamic comments which were visible on his profile, such as: *‘Such a Muslim will not die politely as he should in the peace of his house quarantine, he will wander about the city and spread the disease until he dies and takes thousands of people with him’, ‘I would fence off this whole area right now and chase these good-for-nothings inside and never let them out... let them rot in the mosque... we can also cough right into it’, ‘To them it is a biological weapon that they use in their fight against the infidels, to kill them in this way, and if they are to die while doing it, they believe themselves to be martyrs for their faith’, ‘There’ll be less Muslims, so, bottom line is OK...’, and ‘But let them meet there and not here. The fewer black faces in Germany, the fewer in our beautiful country’.*

WARSAW. On 4th April, an article by **Krzysztof Zagozda** titled *The Pandemic Serves the Globalisation and Construction of Polin* (the Hebrew name for Poland) appeared on the website, **Nacjonalista.pl** which is connected to the **National Rebirth of Poland (NOP)**. It presented an antisemitic vision of the effects of the pandemic in Poland: *‘My friend, a new citizen, using a fresh passport, will come to replace you. He will take over your bankrupt workshop and will then hire you. If you manage to survive a wave of suicides, you will have to rely on his pleasure and displeasure. You’ll like his strange accent and the smell of garlic and onion around him. But will he like you? The blame for the entire odium resulting from the transformation of Polish society, namely from its pauperisation, will fall on the coronavirus, that means nothing. Our big businesses were stolen from us a long time ago. Now is the time for the small ones; they are small but still gave us scraps of freedom. Their new owners are already booking tickets at Ben Gurion Airport. Now you know who the empty housing estates are waiting for, those hundreds of hectares bought under the pretext of building the Park of Poland – Suntuago [a recently opened water park in Żyrardów, central Poland – translator’s note], and others whose existence we cannot even sense yet? Now do you know why Israeli capital took over the shares in our largest security companies? Now do you comprehend all these circumstances related to Polin? «The pandemic serves globalisation» – there are plenty of such warnings on the internet. And it is hard to deny them. Everyone, even if a little overwhelmed, equipped with knowledge of the alphabet and the ability to use reason, will sooner or later come to the same conclusions. The difference of opinion can only be as to whether THEY developed the virus themselves, or only cleverly took advantage of the event of its «spontaneous birth» and expansion.’* The article was accompanied by an illustration of the shadow of a stereotypical Jew with a caricatured large nose.

POLAND. On 6th April on the **Sport.pl** portal, numerous racist comments were observed below an article published within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which were aimed towards people of African origin. The text referred to a proposal made by two French physicians to test the new vaccines on residents of Africa. Against such notions, protests were expressed publicly by sportsmen, including Samuel Eto’o, a former footballer of the FC Barcelona team, as well as Austrian footballer of Nigerian origin, David Alaba, currently of Bayern Munich, who wrote: *‘Trying a COVID-19 vaccine in Africa??? Are these two guys doctors or clowns? This is a kind of racism I could never imagine. Disgraceful and unacceptable! We all have to stand together and work hand in hand to fight this virus’.* Below the article summarising the controversial proposal, as well as the critical responses from the sportsmen, Polish internet users wrote the following comments: *‘If you don’t like it, hit the road home. Even without these players European leagues are coming more and more to look like the African Tribes Cup’, ‘Let the negroids serve some benefit’, ‘And this is a good idea, at least it will save some Guinea pigs!’, ‘I understand that they will spurn a vaccine from a white man. So, it’s interesting where will they get it from? From Vacanda?’*

[Vacanda is a fictional country in sub-Saharan Africa, created by Marvel Comics – translator’s note], *‘Virologists from sub-Saharan territories, working in medical academies located in oases will fend for themselves – they don’t need the help of white racists!’*, and *‘Let them f.ck off to Africa and there test the vaccine on Europeans. What’s the problem?’*. The racist posts did not evoke any response from moderators.

WARSAW. On 7th April, **Hanna Kazahari** who lives in Tokyo and is the founder of the TAMA Forum for Polish Expatriates in Japan, and **Rafał Mossakowski** who was hosting a talk published on **YouTube** on the **CEPolska (Poland Educational Centre)** channel, voiced antisemitic claims with reference to the COVID-19 pandemic. They both avoided the use of the word “Jews”, and instead used such expressions as “Zionists” or “the Rothschilds”. For instance, Mossakowski used this term to describe members of the World Health Organization (WHO), sneeringly remarking: *“Of course it’s us, the Zionists, we created this organisation and we run it”*. Kazahari reacted to that by stating that the pandemic was the result of action by “the Rothschilds” [another term used to allude to Jews – translator’s note], who *“want to control all people in the world, they want to have people chained, to put them in cages, to enslave them. They want to change the entire world into one huge, beautiful concentration camp”*. She also spoke about the activity of Bill Gates and the alleged *“plan to introduce the Fourth Reich by the Zionists”*. Kazahari went on to reveal such a vision: *“Fascism was a German national socialism stemming from the Rothschilds, and the Rockefellers. Same with Communism. Marxism and Leninism took their roots from the ideology of the Rockefellers and the Rothschilds, it was financed and supported. All these total absurdities, the gulags, the collective farms were the brainchild of the Rothschilds and the Rockefellers [...], so that we would be like livestock being led to the slaughter. Concentration camps were their invention. They got bored so for some years they made concentration camps for Muslims and for Palestinians. Now the time has come for Europe, the United States, and Japan”*. Both Kazahari and Mossakowski expressed doubt as to the existence of COVID-19, and downplayed the number of deaths due to the virus. They claimed that the “Zionist media” had manipulated photos of piled up caskets in the USA and in Italy, and that these photos had actually been taken in 2014. They both compared the reality of combatting the epidemic in Poland to a concentration camp. Mossakowski said: *“The television should take archive footage from Auschwitz-Birkenau, show it and say: this is today’s view of Warsaw, how Poles work, all dressed the same in such striped garments and this is just another day of the coronavirus epidemic in Poland”*. To this, Kazahari replied that *“we have not strayed far from Auschwitz-Birkenau”*, and claimed that even in today’s world there are rituals of the drawing and ingesting of children’s blood, and as an example she named Hillary Clinton, who together with her assistant *“tortured a girl”* (this is probably a reference to the so-called ‘pizzagate’, an absurd conspiracy theory, spread by the extreme right in the USA in 2016). She also spoke about a *“cookbook written by Dr. Mengele together with Hillary Clinton in which people are cut up”*. At the end of the conversation she added that *“one should fear the fascist government which puts the Zionist plan into practice in Poland, because we have a total back-to-the wall situation of a concentration camp and Polish secret agents act as capos in this camp”*. The CEP channel is known for propagating antisemitism, it has featured guests such as **Rafał Ziemkiewicz** (who hosts programmes on Polish state television TVP) and **Confederation** party Member of Parliament, **Krzysztof Bosak** (a candidate in the 2020 presidential elections), on numerous occasions.

SZPROTAWA. On 8th April, local media reported that a security guard of the **Biedronka** supermarket on Młynarska Street refused a Ukrainian man entrance to the store on the grounds of the customer’s nationality. One witness to the event reported: *“When the young man tried to enter the store, the security guard asked him if he was Polish or Ukrainian. When he replied that he was Ukrainian, he was told that he could not go inside”*. The employee’s xenophobic behaviour

apparently stemmed from the belief that all persons of Ukrainian origin in Szprotawa were carriers of COVID-19. None of the other customers intervened in the situation. The shopper returned to the supermarket later that day in the company of a woman, also from Ukraine. Whilst they tried to shop, the security guards called the police, accusing the Ukrainians of breaking quarantine. After officers arrived, it transpired that the suspicions of the security guards were unfounded. Representatives of Biedronka issued a statement on this matter. They claimed that the incident had arisen because the security guards had acted in accordance with the guidelines received earlier from the local police, which “*unambiguously requested that no Ukrainian citizen be allowed to enter the store, and to call the emergency telephone number, 112 immediately should they try to do so*”. The claim that such guidelines existed was denied by Marcin Maludy, a spokesperson for the Lubusz police: “*What happened was instigated exclusively by the security guards of the shop. I am surprised that a large retail chain is attempting to shift the blame for the activities of its employees onto the police*”.

WARSAW. On 8th April, **Radio Wnet** presented its listeners with an unusual programme introducing a conspiracy theory pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic, advocated by well-known British extremist, **David Icke**. The programme was also broadcast on the radio’s website and **YouTube** channel. In a lengthy lecture by staff journalist **Jan Olendzki**, listeners were asked: “*What connection is there between Silicon Valley, the Davos Forum, the 9/11 attack, and a film starring Jennifer Lawrence?*” (a reference to the film, *The Hunger Games*, directed by Gary Ross, in which the authorities force people to participate in a series of mortally dangerous games; the film represents a vision of communities enslaved by totalitarian dictatorships). In recorded statements by Icke he said, amongst other things: “*What we see every time when something like that takes place - those attacks on 9/11 are classic examples – [...] all this brings us closer to the model of the Society of Death Games [...]. What we are seeing is the approaching realisation of such a project like the Society of Death Games*”. According to Icke, the responsibility for the COVID-19 pandemic rests with a secret global group, described as a “*cult*”, with which “*madmen from Silicon Valley*”, the WHO, the British heir to the throne Prince Charles, and entrepreneur Bill Gates are connected. The host of the programme presented Icke’s views seriously, and stated that they constituted “*an interesting voice in the discussion*”. David Icke was once a professional footballer and sports commentator, but has long been better known to the world as one of the creators of the most extreme conspiracy theories, many of which have an antisemitic slant. The crux of his theories is a belief in the existence of a race he calls “*reptilians*” or “*lizard-people*”, which includes the former US President, George W. Bush and Queen Elizabeth II. Through the Illuminati order, this group is said to aim to control the world, and the proof of that can supposedly be found in **The Protocols of the Elders of Zion**, a widely discredited antisemitic pamphlet published in 1903. The “*Reptilians*”, Icke alleges, falsified the history of the Holocaust and the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001. On 1st May 2020, Icke’s Facebook profile was removed for voicing conspiracy theories in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. On 2nd May, the English language channel belonging to David Icke (from which Radio Wnet took its inspiration) was also removed from YouTube for voicing dangerous conspiracy theories about COVID-19. The host of the programme on Radio Wnet stated that the presentation of David Icke’s views took place at the personal request of the radio station’s director, **Krzysztof Skowroński**. Skowroński is the President of the **Polish Journalists’ Association (SDP)**, and the publication, *Kurier Wnet* associated with the radio station received a grant in 2020 from the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, as part of the ‘Patriotism of Tomorrow’ programme.

WARSAW. On 8th April, the programme, **Express Biedrzyckiej**, which is broadcast on **YouTube** on the channel of the daily tabloid newspaper, **Super Express**, was devoted mainly to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Janusz Korwin-Mikke**, a Member of Parliament representing the **Confederation**

party, made the following statement: *“Men must be able to kill. If we are not able to kill, we will be slaughtered by the Arabs, by the Chinese, by anyone”*. The host of the programme, **Kamila Biedrzycka** offered no reaction to this statement.

WARSAW. On 8th April, in an interview about sports during the COVID-19 crisis for **Weszlo.com**, **Maciej Purchała**, President of the football club, **Hutnik Warszawa** (of the Polish fifth division) made a homophobic remark. When discussing the financial situation of his club due to the COVID-19 epidemic, he said: *“If the city doesn't help us, and our district surely won't help, as they prefer to support LGBT - then we're going down as a team”*.

WARSAW. On 9th April, in an interview for the **Panta Rhei** channel on **YouTube**, Member of Parliament, **Grzegorz Braun** (**Confederation** party) presented xenophobic conspiracy theories about the origins of COVID-19. In his argument he offered the following words: *“Might it be simply an act of biological warfare? [...] If this is an act of biological warfare, is it an initiating act or is it a pre-emptive one? Maybe this is a de-escalation hit that is supposed to freeze the armies or fleets already preparing for conventional operations, in the sense of our idea of a Third World War, in their starting blocks? [...] Who might benefit from it? The Chinese, Americans, Muscovites, Jews, or all of them at once?”* Another conspiracy theory presented by Braun concerned the alleged implantation of chips on recipients of a potential COVID-19 vaccine: *“When the horn sounds a great victory over the coronavirus, then those allowed out of their homes who go straight to the clinics to get the vaccine will at the same time get in their foreheads [...] a mark of the beast in the form of some electronic component permanently introduced into their bodies”*. In the same interview, Braun also made a number of antisemitic statements. He referred to the alleged *“Jewish claims”* against Poland. He claimed that *“Ways to pay up the Jewish demands will be found. There will be overpayment for some super extra army equipment; and the very operation to take us out of this crisis, this rescue programme, will undoubtedly cost us dearly. It will be a great opportunity for shearing the sheep once again to the bare skin. Money lenders will come with a helping hand, and they will save us, and the Warsaw government and the President will be only too ready to fall into the arms of the usurers”*. The comments made by Polish internet users on the video included many antisemitic and xenophobic statements and conspiracy theories, for example: *“Poles will have to pay the Jewish claims”*, *“Under the cover of a smokescreen a herd of rams emerges with a Bedouin at the forefront, they come out of forests and parks, flood our cities, administer The Quran in suppositories and rape dogs”*, and *“The Jews are still waiting for the Messiah, that is our Antichrist. A real apocalypse”*.

POZNAŃ. On 10th April, Mayor Jacek Jaśkowiak issued an appeal to the residents of Poznań regarding xenophobic acts of hostility that had intensified in connection with the COVID-19 epidemic. Jaśkowiak stated: *“Unfortunately, migrants of Asian origin are increasingly encountering discriminatory behaviour resulting from ignorance and fear of illness. [...] Let's support each other and not provoke discriminatory behaviour, let's cooperate for the good of all of us, regardless of our origin”*. Comments on the appeal, published on the **epoznan.pl** website, included racist statements and conspiracy theories, such as: *“Ukrainians, Russians, Germans and Muslims are our enemies!”*, *“As usual, he is worried more about the immigrant Arabs than the people of Poznań”*, *“Down with foreigners!!!”*, *“No masks when visiting the chapatis, handshakes when greeting them”* (‘chapati’ is a racial slur used to describe brown-skinned people in Polish language), *“the leftist ideas of reducing the population are materialising right before our eyes – it was Spurek [a Member of the European Parliament from Poznan] and others who postulated that the population numbers are decreased and here you are – Communist China has helped, as always, by manufacturing the freak virus, and now is making a packet on the sale of masks and respirators”*, and *“but the stuff came from China after all... all this crap is to do with that nation...”*

it's a pity that the mayor concerns himself with such bullshit not to worsen our relations with foreign nations...".

WARSAW. On 11th April in a broadcast by the state radio station, **Polish Radio 24** titled: *What Could be the Socio-economic Results of the Coronavirus Pandemic?* its presenter, **Robert Tekieli** (former editor-in-chief of *Brulion* and currently a columnist of the **Gazeta Polska** newspaper), as well as guest, **Jakub Pacan** (journalist of the **Solidarność Weekly** newspaper), used the COVID-19 pandemic to launch an attack lasting more than twenty minutes on imaginary ideological enemies. Tekieli argued: *"Western civilisation had been oppressed for half a century, a new form of revolution, the rainbow one, the green one, eco-religion. [...] This revolution comes by way of the UN, the European Union. [...] What kind of a world will we have after the pandemic, will the revolution continue to destroy our civilisation, and by what methods? [...] This revolutionary trend is planned; it all leads to some goal. [...] Let's remember that liberalism is an ideology akin to Marxism. [...] There is a multitude of conspiratorial ideas [...], there is the LGBT ideology, the vegan ideology, there is an ideology which is actually already an ecological religion, ecoterrorism. [...] Such words as nation, mother, father, are being destroyed. [...] When we consider the LGBT ideology, it's something disgusting. [...] Such a fight against language began in modern times from the Lutheran revolution, and it can be seen specifically in the Anglican revolution in which the sin by one person, Henry VIII led to the secession of the Anglican church, a schism came about [in 16th century England – translator's note]. This revolution, which has continued since 1968, running through institutions, is, to put it simply, an institutionalisation of sin. These people want to introduce by any means possible a logic of destruction and chaos, by forcing communities to live in sin".*

WARSAW. On 11th April, the day before Easter Sunday, the editorial board of the right-wing portal, **wpolityce.pl** published an interview with **Dr. Rafal Brzeski**, who is known for his dissemination of conspiracy theories, and was introduced as *"a specialist in the field of information war"*. Brzeski talked about what he saw as positive ideological results of the COVID-19 pandemic: *"What we are witnessing today, I can describe by calling it «Globalisation hitting the dirt». Because it is just that. Coronavirus has made one big «check you out». The ideology of globalization has failed [...]. Coronavirus has taken out the globalisation ideology and the globalised economy [...]. We should expect a redirection of the economy and a change of ideology"*. Moreover, he expressed satisfaction at the number of victims in some countries: *"Happily, even Russia is beginning to have coronavirus. In two to three weeks it will face a very serious problem"*. He also expressed hope for more unfortunate events and more victims: *"One scenario predicts that a revolution, similar to that of the Bolsheviks, will break out in Russia. Let me remind you that the Bolshevik revolution broke out mainly because of the bloodshed, the huge number of soldiers who fell during World War I. This was the spark that triggered it. The next revolution may be the result of the number of coronavirus victims. Russia may have an even bigger problem than we do. And then this whole provocation by them will turn against them"*.

KRAKÓW. On 12th April the *W Stronę Dialogu* ('Towards Dialogue') Foundation launched an internet fundraiser to equip underprivileged members of the Roma community with face masks and disinfectant in connection with the COVID-19 epidemic. Under a post about this initiative on Facebook, a host of racist comments appeared. The organizer of the fundraiser, Dr. Joanna Talewicz-Kwiatkowska mentioned in a statement to the media that internet users had reacted to this initiative with *"rage at how we could help Gypsies and not Poles. People are convinced that it is the Roma people's own fault that they live marginalized. That they don't want to integrate, have strange customs, that they are dirty, misfits, lazy, and do not like Poles. And if they worked, they would be able to afford masks. Many comments posted under the story had to be removed because*

they were so vulgar. We wrote back to many, trying to explain that it's neither culture nor ethnic differences, but the socio-economic situation that has caused many Roma people to live in poverty. [...] People replied that still they won't change their minds".

WARSAW. On 14th April, **Radio Wnet** hosted the celebrity, **Wojciech Cejrowski** who voiced xenophobic and pseudo-scientific conspiracy theories about the alleged harmfulness of the 5G network and its connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated: *"Being close to 5G gives symptoms very much similar to those of Coronavirus. Because water boils inside our bodies. [...] Let's take a look at 5G in China right now – I am not afraid of insulting those rice eaters because I don't deal with them – the main city where this 5G was placed is none other than Wuhan".* Cejrowski made light of the victims of the pandemic, talking about *"Lombardy, where there's a whole lot of old people and Chinese"*. On another occasion on 18th March, reacting to an article entitled *China Offers Poland Help with Coronavirus* on **Facebook**, Cejrowski expressed his animosity towards Chinese people, talking about a state of war: *"Such help is dangerous. The Chinese lie and will keep on lying [...]. China is on the attack and this is war and not brotherly help"*.

WARSAW. On 14th April, speaking on RDC Radio, Ola Dinh, a representative of the Vietnamese community in Poland, described incidents which she had experienced personally in connection with the COVID-19 epidemic. She told how she had been abused on the street by xenophobic insults. She had also experienced signs of animosity, such as fellow customers ostentatiously bypassing her when shopping. Dinh, who has spent her entire life in Poland, referred to those incidents as follows: *"Since the epidemic began, it [racism – translator's note] can now be felt much stronger"*.

WARSAW. On 14th April, **Confederation** Member of Parliament, **Grzegorz Braun** posted a recording on his **YouTube** channel in which he shared conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 pandemic. During the recording, he said: *"What is going on here? Do we already have a biological war? Was the virus a de-escalation blow, and who carried out the hit? Was it our American comrades [...] or the Chinese? Was it Bill Gates?"* The MP also suggested that Jews would benefit from the pandemic: *"Is it really just a coincidence that in a state situated in Palestine [a reference to the State of Israel - Braun does not recognise its existence, and therefore does not mention its name – translator's note] great success in the work on the vaccine is being seen?"*. He also added: *"We can see that the big winners everywhere, including in our country, will as always be the big usurers because via their hands, the Polish government will impose transactions and assistance procedures to Polish entrepreneurs"*. In his speech, Braun proposed that a certificate be given to people who have tested negative for COVID-19 called a *"certificate of kosher standard"*.

WARSAW. On 14th April, **Radio Wnet** broadcast an interview with **Fr. Tomasz Jachemczyk**, a Polish priest currently working in Liguria in northern Italy. This interview was also presented on the radio station's website, under the title: *'In Italy one may be allowed to go to a library but not to church. Fr. Jachemczyk: one can see here the action of a masonic government'*. Throughout the programme, the clergyman derided the alleged persecution of the Catholic church in Italy in connection with sanitary restrictions caused by the COVID-19 epidemic. In his words: *"under the guise of coronavirus, there is a more or less hidden persecution of the church"*, for which he laid the blame on *"a conspiracy by the actions of the masonic government of Italy"*. In his statement he declined to mention the very real threat posed by COVID-19, which is particularly acute in northern Italy, where within several weeks it had already caused tens of thousands of people to die. The clergyman also criticised Polish regulations which limited the number of people inside a church during the epidemic.

RZESZÓW. On 15th April, in an interview with *Przegląd Sportowy*, a sports website, **Andrzej Grzyb**, a former Polish national team volleyball player and now manager, presented a bizarre proposal that the next volleyball season take place with the participation of only native Poles, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In his argument, he contended: *“For the benefit of Polish clubs in the next season, participation of foreigners in our games should be kept to a minimum. I am thinking here not only about the players, but also about the coaches and other members of the training teams. I know that my view will soon give rise to a scream among CEOs, volleyball players and supporters, but in my opinion, there is no other way”*. In addition, Grzyb accused foreign players and coaches of causing a recurrence of the epidemic in Poland: *“It can’t be that a Pole remains unemployed, whilst the club employs a foreigner. First of all, we must take care of our own players and coaches. Secondly, following the pandemic, the less travel between countries, the better. Imagine the Armageddon that would be caused by the return of foreigners to Poland. Are we going to be exposed to another virus attack?”* He also postulated: *“There is no point in throwing money at foreigners. It is only April now, so there is a lot of time to terminate the contracts signed previously with foreigners”*. **Michał Adamczewski**, a past coach of the Polish national junior volleyball team, was pleased with Grzyb’s proposal. He stated: *“The key today is the improvement of training and the optimising of expenses. We will not achieve this by hiring an Italian at the expense of a Pole”*. **Ryszard Czarnecki**, Vice President of the **Polish Volleyball Federation (PZPS)** and **Law and Justice** Member of the European Parliament also reacted positively to these demands. In an interview with *Przegląd Sportowy*, he declared that the proposal to limit the number of foreigners in competitions was *“worth considering”*, but that it would be difficult to implement for technical reasons. Therefore, Czarnecki recommended that the club authorities take the initiative in this matter: *“I am afraid, however, that the complete absence of foreign players and coaches is an unrealistic vision. Nevertheless, it is possible of course to think of some restrictions in this regard, but PZPS could not do it arbitrarily. We have no mechanisms, nor are there legal instruments. The clubs would have to come to some agreement on the matter and pursue a common policy”*. Discrimination in employment based on nationality (and also on grounds of sex, age, disability, race, religion, political beliefs, trade union membership, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation) is contrary to both Polish and European Union law.

TORUŃ. On 15th April, in an interview published on the **Radio Maryja** internet portal, **Dr. Zbigniew Hałat**, a former Chief Sanitary Inspector and former Deputy Minister of Health, accused the World Health Organization (WHO) of prioritising *“mainly its own affairs, which are primarily the promotion of LGBT culture, or the so-called gender ideology instead of what it should exist for, that is, combating infectious diseases”*. Hałat also advocated xenophobic conspiracy theories about the alleged goals of the WHO: *“It has always been an organisation serving the interests of the communists – be it the Russians or, more recently, the Chinese. The Chinese especially, when taking over the colonisation of Africa, are using international organisations as a cover for their activities”*. In addition, Hałat spoke offensively about the WHO director, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, calling him *“a well-known Ethiopian with a terrorist past”*.

WARSAW. On 15th April in an interview broadcast on **YouTube** on the **wRealu24** channel, **Robert Bąkiewicz** chairman of the **Stowarzyszenie Marsz Niepodległości** (‘Independence March Association’) and former spokesman for the **Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny** (‘National-Radical Camp’) conflated the threat of the COVID-19 epidemic with the that of alleged *“Jewish claims”*. He stated: *“It [the question of claims – translator’s note] can be deadly in and of itself, and compiled with Coronavirus will lead to the downfall of the Polish state”*. He also spoke about the necessity of *“not allowing Jewish organisations to plunder, those extortionists and blackmailers”*. On the same day there happened to be a reading of a number of controversial citizens’ bills in the

Polish parliament, including the bill known as ‘*Stop 447*’, supported by the **Confederation** party. It pertained to American Congress JUST Act (known in Poland as No. 447 Act), which in Poland is used by adherents of the extreme right as a pretext to propagate antisemitic conspiracy theories. Bąkiewicz delivered a speech from the parliament lectern, as the sponsor of the bill, in which he used the term “*so-called Holocaust*”.

POZNAŃ. In the second half of April, in the middle of the night, unknown perpetrators smashed the windows of a flat occupied by a Filipino man, who has been living in Poland for ten years. “*It was like a bomb. I got up from bed to see what had happened, but there was nobody outside. We found a large stone in the room*”, he told the media. He notified the police of the incident. A report was broadcast on 23rd April on the television channel, TVN24, and that night, there was a second attack on the flat, with stones once again being thrown. According to the victim, both attacks were associated with the COVID-19 epidemic and manifestations of hostility towards people of Asian origin. “*Some Filipinos experience incidents of people calling «corona» after them on the streets! One of the Filipinos was spat in the face and called «Chinese!».* We are very afraid” – he said in a television interview. The xenophobic assault was condemned by city mayor, Jacek Jaśkowiak at a press conference on 24th April: “*I am appalled that a foreigner who lives in Poznań has encountered such unpleasantness. [...] I am asking you all to treat foreigners with respect. Just because someone is of a different skin colour or has different features, doesn’t mean they pose a threat to us. Please, treat everyone kindly*”.

GRZECHYNIA. On 16th April, **Fr. Prof. Piotr Natanek**, a suspended Catholic priest, delivered a homily from a self-established recollection retreat in Grzechynia (Sucha Beskidzka county). The homily was broadcast on **YouTube**. In it he discussed several conspiracy theories relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Amongst other things, he said: “*We assume that the vaccine and the disease has been invented. [...] When they created Hitler – he was created by America and the freemasonry. [...] There is a general plan to reduce the population of the world – this has been implemented for a long time. Abortions, condoms, other contraceptive devices – it doesn’t work the way they want, so the problem must be solved in the style of Auschwitz-Birkenau*”. In the course of his tirade, Natanek included an antisemitic slur about Archbishop Stanisław Gądecki: “*What next has our leader of the Sanhedrin thought up?*” (Sanhedrin was the Jewish religious authority in the Greek-Roman era). He also shared a conspiracy theory in the election of the “*so-called new Pope*”. “*How cunning and intelligent these masons are. [...] They chose the name Francis for a special purpose. [...] I have a whole article about it in German, from its front-line outpost, the Rotary club*”. Natanek was suspended by church authorities in 2011 for ‘ostentatious insubordination’. Since that time, he has continued to preach sermons, and broadcasts them via the internet. Many of his recordings reach 50-70,000 views on YouTube. There are some with 400-600,000 views, and one of his homilies has reached 3 million views). The content of these videos has been of an antisemitic character on numerous occasions. The Catholic church has never imposed any further punishment on Natanek, such as, for example, excommunication or expelling him from the clergy.

WARSAW. On 16th April, on the **YouTube** channel, **wRealu24**, its regular commentator **Krzysztof Karoń** talking to host **Marcin Rola** explained his conspiracy theories relating to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the COVID-19 pandemic. He began his argument with offensive statements about Bill Gates, who, as Karoń emphasised, financially supports the WHO: “*He is a criminal, a bandit. [...] He was in favour of a certain vision of the world, a barbaric and criminal concept. He has a lot of stolen money, and now he can do whatever he wants and indeed does whatever he wants*”. Karoń also suggested, albeit somewhat confusingly, what he believed was the goal of the WHO’s activities: “*From its very beginning it has been an ideological organization*”, representing “*those parts of the political left and right that are simply thieves and strive to recreate*

a global system of looting. In order to implement this goal, operations need to be carried out on people and on society, and an infrastructure must be built". According to Karoń, "a breakthrough moment in the history of the WHO, when it defined itself ideologically, was the moment when homosexuality was removed from the list of deviances." He proceeded to insult the WHO director, T. A. Ghebreyesus, a native of Ethiopia, saying: "he has a London-African Marxist base", and "this is a case of Pol Pot". Karoń then stated that the United States did not want to "withdraw from the pathological course on which it had been since its inception or creation". Karoń believes that Donald Trump must have realised that "the white man's world cannot produce what it needs". Therefore, the American labour market will "need to find substitutes for yellow people. The question is whether or not it will be us". In his argument, Karoń also used antisemitic rhetoric, declaring that the number 447 is weighing more and more heavily over Trump's shoulders, "and it is very likely that he will sacrifice us to carry on with his own business" (thus referring to the so-called US Act No. 447, which in Poland is falsely presented by supporters of the far right as an order to honour the alleged financial "Jewish claims"). Later in the broadcast, Karoń further developed his offensive WHO conspiracy theory: "If a situation occurs that requires a specific ideological project, this organisation will become an international organisation for exterminating and killing people, since it has no brakes within it". According to him, the WHO supports "the most criminal project that has appeared for many decades: this is the early sexualisation of children, which amounts to nothing else than [...] the animalisation of the human species." Karoń also stated that "from the point of view of the human species" the WHO was a "criminal" organisation.

WARSAW. On 16th April on the programme *W tyle wizji* ('Behind TV') broadcast on the state news channel, **TVP Info**, the host **Rafał Ziemkiewicz** expressed his well-known negative sentiments towards immigrants. When talking about the COVID-19 pandemic, he asked his guest, a Polish woman living in Sweden, the following question: "They say that the Swedish are a very disciplined society, but they also host a great deal of immigrants – so my question is, do those immigrants behave in the same way? Are they concerned about getting sick? We hear various opinions from the Western countries that immigrants ignore the problem and believe it has nothing to do with them". Much to his surprise, his guest declared that when it comes to following the guidelines and safety measures, "people from other countries are much better mobilised than native Swedes". Ziemkiewicz himself had shown himself to be highly careless about the pandemic. On 6th March, he said the following on air on **TV Republika**: "It's just a flu! It will spread this or that way. This is absurd to close events or an entire town like in Lombardy – this doesn't make any sense. It is a flu and it will find a way to spread. But it's not black death or ebola. People won't be dying on the streets in convulsions. They will just give more interviews". On 9th March during an episode of the *W tyle wizji* programme aired by TVP Info, he commented on the decision to close churches in Italy in the following manner: "It has always been this way that whenever a plague strikes, Christians flock to churches as they believe in God. But what those Italian bishops say is that God is no more. [...] There's a commandment for that occasion – a Catholic person should once a week attend mass. But if there are no masses in the whole region as the Church left its followers in the lurch and closed up, then what are they supposed to do?". Also, on 9th March on **Twitter**, Ziemkiewicz posted the following: "Fortunately, brothels continue to operate. You need to find some spiritual comfort somewhere when the Church refuses to do it".

WROCLAW. **Roman Zieliński**, a long standing leader of the football hooligans of **Śląsk Wrocław**, who was sentenced in 2015 for inciting national and racial hatred in his self-published book, *How I Came to Love Adolf Hitler*, has repeatedly questioned online the threat of COVID-19, and stressed that the "Jewish threat" is much more important. He has posted such content many times on **Twitter**, such as the following on 16th April: "I'm so sad to look at our society. A proud

nation which allowed itself to be forced to wear some stupid masks due to propaganda. What will we allow next? When they find 447 ways to rob us blind, will we also accept it and pretend it's for our own good?" (the number, 447 referred to the JUST Act, known in Poland as the '447 Act', which is falsely presented by the far right as an order to pay alleged "Jewish claims"). In another tweet of 20th April, Zieliński commented on racist conspiracy theories related to COVID-19, asserting that a deficiency of vitamin D (which is produced when tanning) increases susceptibility to COVID-19. He wrote: "now we know why the Negroes are not that sensitive to the virus". On 30th April, he once again demonstrated his anthropological prowess: "I have it in my eyes. A Negro is a Negro, a gypsy is a gypsy. A yellow is a yellow. I don't see much difference between the Viet Kong, Chinaman or Korean, but I immediately see that they're yellow".

POLAND. On 17th April, the **O2** website, owned by Wirtualna Polska, a host of racist comments and conspiracy theories about China were posted by Polish internet users under an article titled *The Coronavirus. Emmanuel Macron: Many Things Have Happened in China that We Don't Know About Yet*. Here are some examples: "Let's throw the Chinese out of Poland immediately", "Off with the yellow plague", "Trump did a good job, I've never liked that WHO much, there are too many Chinese and they got bored of their status as slaves, so they want to take over the world!", "China sends 85% of its production to Europe, these are products for every-day use. And they contain the virus, so China wants to take over the global industry, we should be afraid of them slants", "We want nothing «made in China». Let's see what the yellows eat then", and "There was a prophecy «the yellow race will conquer the world». And it has done it. Starting with the coronavirus...".

WARSAW. On 17th April, in a conversation broadcast on the **YouTube** channel **wRealu24**, **Dr. Marcin Masny**, a journalist, proclaimed conspiracy theories about the root cause of the COVID-19 pandemic. He suggested that in order to discover it, "some *Cupola of the mafia* [meaning the leaders of the mafia – translator's note] that resides in America right close to Trump, a mafia which in any case has ruled America for several generations, this committee governing the great mafia, somehow came to an agreement with the Chinese". At the end of the conversation hosted by **Krzysztof Lech Łuksza**, Masny put on a face mask with the words, "the pandemic is a scam" written on it, and repeated this slogan loudly. Masny has been an associate of the editing board of the *Najwyższy Czas* ['High Time'] magazine run by **Janusz Korwin-Mikke**, and in 2009 ran for a seat in the European Parliament, sponsored by the far right **Libertas** party.

WARSAW. On 18th April, **Polish Radio 24** broadcast a programme with a discussion on the European Parliament resolution on the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic which criticised the policies of the Polish and Hungarian governments. A commentator, **Dr. Artur Wróblewski**, a lecturer in American Studies at Lazarski University, elaborated at great length on his bizarre conspiracy theories: "Social and business lobbyists of the Polish opposition, they want nothing except always to simply condemn Poland [...]. This lobby is related to the political opposition and is influential. [...] Does the lobby exist or is it a myth? Yes, it exists as matter of fact. We have world-wide lobbies, such as the pro-Jewish, Israeli lobby [...], there is also an influential homosexual lobby in Brussels or Washington, where various matters can be dealt with if one is part of this arrangement; that's just how life is over there". In a later part of the chaotic statement, Wróblewski attacked the World Health Organization, claiming that, like the European Union, it "is doing nothing" about COVID-19, whilst its director is a "Marxist activist of the eighties from Ethiopia" who now "sees no problems in China or Belarus, for example in relation to the Chinese spread of this coronavirus". **Jerzy Jachowicz**, the host of the programme, responded with approval to these bizarre statements.

RUDA ŚLĄSKA. On 19th April, the anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, **Kazimierz Płotkowski**, former chairman of the Silesian Region of the conservative Poland Together party, posted a comment on **Twitter** with the following antisemitic content: “*Jews can make money on anything and everything... perhaps this COVID19 is a new holohoax [a made-up antisemitic word with reference to the stereotype about Jews allegedly benefiting from the Holocaust – translator’s note]*”. In 2018, Płotkowski had posted another statement on Twitter asserting that “*Jews are not humans, they are animals*”. The incident at the time was exposed by the “NEVER AGAIN” Association, and Jarosław Gowin, Poland’s then Deputy Prime Minister and president of Poland Together, announced that the prosecutor’s office would pursue criminal proceedings. However, it seems that to date Płotkowski has not suffered any consequences, and is free and able to publish further antisemitic statements.

WARSAW. On 19th April on the **wPolityce.pl** website, an article by Marek Budzisz titled *Chinese go Home! We will be hearing more of this after the plague* was published, and attracted a large number of racist comments and conspiracy theories. Here are some examples: ‘*Make the Chinese and the other wogs go home, let them stay there and eat whatever it is they eat*’, ‘*The Chinese pandemic proved that the communists and masons follow the Nazi ideology and want to get rid of old people. They use other nations to do it*’, ‘*The Chinese can’t be trusted. They are communists. Make them pay for letting out the virus, deaths, treatment expenses and recession*’, and ‘*Yellow people from all over the world, go home. Chinese go home* [the last sentence was written in English – translator’s note]’. The websites administrators failed to react to these comments in any way.

WARSAW. On 19th April, the **wRealu24** channel on **YouTube** broadcast a program in which the host, **Piotr Szlachtowicz** and his studio guest **Marcin Dybowski** (perennial activist and publisher of ultra-right books and past owner of the antisemitic bookstore **Antyk** in Warsaw) were preaching conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 pandemic. Dybowski questioned the legitimacy of the sanitary regulations introduced in the recent weeks and stated, “*it is not about saving our economy, it is about destroying it*”. Here he spoke about the connections of the “*Order of Malta of which member is Mr. Szumowski [health minister – translator’s note] with Germany and about their financial support from Germany*” as a result of which “*we are experiencing pressure from the German side so that Poland activates its economy with a delay*”. Dybowski also stated that the photo of Szumowski with Mother Teresa of Calcutta was a fake (the photo was published online in mid-March 2020 and it had been taken in 1997, when after graduating from the medical university, Szumowski worked in Calcutta a volunteer). Dybowski argued that since Szumowski “*was in India for such a long time, perhaps there is a connection with China there*”. He further warned about “*China’s desire to conquer the entire world*”, about the fact that “*Western Europe surrendered to the Chinese capital,*” and about the “*invigilation of the Chinese capital and the Chinese Communist Party in Africa.*” Later in the conversation he said that “*WHO is a dangerous organisation, infiltrated by China and commanded by an Ethiopian communist*”. Commenting on the actions of the Polish authorities in relation with the pandemic, Dybowski claimed an imaginary threat, stating: “*I do not want a situation in which we are to be bought out by China*”. He also announced that China will “*take over*” Spain, Poland “*will be enslaved by the Chinese*” and as a result “*Germany, Russia and China will rule*” in Europe. In this spirit, Dybowski repeated the words of Member of Parliament, **Grzegorz Braun** (**Confederation** party) about the fact that “*we are threatened with kosher vaccines*” while mentioning alleged depopulation plans by Bill Gates and the UN. He also encouraged people not to wear face masks: “*Poles, be brave and stop being so subordinate*”. The host, Piotr Szlachtowicz questioned the existence of COVID-19 all together. Both interlocutors connected the topic of the COVID-19 with the antisemitic thread of alleged “*Jewish claims*” and the so-called US Act No. 447.

WARSAW. On 21st April, **Krzysztof Bosak**, a Member of Parliament representing the **Confederation** party who is a candidate in the 2020 Polish presidential election, voiced a number of unusual statements about the World Health Organization (WHO) during a press conference. He called on Poland to stop paying its dues to the organisation which is coordinating the international effort to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. In his statement he said: *“In connection with the prevailing coronavirus pandemic, the World Health Organization has stated that the universal right to abortion is one of the methods which it deems proper to combat the pandemic”*. He called the WHO *“an organisation that is saturated by leftist ideology to the bones”*. He scoffed at accusations of racism made in some countries in connection with the pandemic, connecting them to the closing of borders to immigrants by Viktor Orban, and described them as *“amok with political correctness”*. The recording of Bosak’s statement was broadcast on the Confederation party’s channel on **YouTube**. Below the video, numerous antisemitic comments were posted, some of which incited violence, such as: *‘It’s time to stop financing the WHO. Those Engelkings, Grosses [names of Holocaust historians – translator’s note] and Polins [Polin is the Hebrew name of Poland – translator’s note], and other stupid leftie suckers who are anti-Polish and act at the behest of Marxists and bank bandits harm humanity’*, *“Poland will become Polin’*, *‘The WHO is a satanic mafia, created by the Rothschilds’*, *‘You can hear the metal pipe brandished against the lefties’*, and *‘the WHO, the same as the UN, being a criminal organisation, should be delegalsed immediately and its members, along with their families, murdered in the most brutal way, so that they feel they have had a wretched death!!!’*.

LUBLIN. A far-right internet TV channel, **Idź Pod Prąd** (‘Go Against the Tide’), linked with the **11th November Movement** (best-known for hiring the former presidential candidate, **Marian Kowalski**), has repeatedly referred to the COVID-19 virus as a *“Chinese plague”*. On 24th April, the channel presented a ridiculous theory of alleged plans for the Polish food supply to be redirected to China by railways through Russia, in order to cause *“hunger and high prices”* in Poland.

WARSAW. On 24th April, **Janusz Korwin-Mikke**, a Member of Parliament representing the **Confederation** party spoke on the **wRealu24 YouTube** channel. He voiced conspiracy theories related to the COVID-19 pandemic. He argued that: *“There’s not at all any pandemic - nothing is happening. It’s just hysteria. We live in a world ruled by half-wits and these hyenas, making money on it by selling face masks here and something else there, are fanning the flames to make a profit”*. According to the MP, the government should not be taking any action to combat COVID-19: *“Just like when we had the Hong Kong flu in 1969, the government didn’t do anything. It’s true that 25,000 people died, and the government was right not to do anything because if it began to do something, the count would be not 25,000, but 40,000”*. Later in the interview Korwin-Mikke voiced shocking statements about Bill Gates and his alleged genocidal plans: *“They want us to die not on our own, but we must be killed off by Gates, best by abortion. He wants to establish eugenics, but will not allow people to die in a normal way [...]. He wants to kill them himself to reduce the population count to a level that is proper in his opinion”*.

WARSAW. On 24th April, a video appeared on **YouTube** on the **Multibook** Internet bookstore channel promoting a book by **Dr. Stanisław Krajski** entitled **Masoneria polska 2020** (‘The Polish Freemasonry 2020’), published by **St. Thomas Aquinus Publishers**, in which the author presents a conspiracy-heavy vision of history, arguing that *“it is the masonic movement that is responsible for the epidemic”*. Krajski summarises his theses, presented in the book, in the following manner: *“I began to write this in 2019 and wanted to show how the crisis panned by the Freemasons is getting nearer by giant steps”*. He also stated that COVID-19 *“has been used to first destroy small and medium businesses. [...] This is a general rehearsal, the weakening of all structures before the great crash about which I write in the book”*. He also voiced a number of surprising statements

about Iceland: “Some things were tested there which are now being made fact in Poland in the last year. This is the land with the greatest population of Freemasons - one Freemason is there for every 100 inhabitants”. Krajski’s book also contains antisemitic and xenophobic overtones. Here are some selected titles of chapters and sub-headings: ‘The Rothschilds are becoming the real rulers of Great Britain (and not only)’, ‘The attack by Soros on Great Britain’, ‘The masonic movement wanted to destroy Iceland. Does it want to destroy Poland in the same way?’, ‘Masonic viruses in the Polish economy and politics’, ‘The masonic conspiracy and the colonisation of Poland’, ‘Limiting the population – the masonic plans to poison water and food’, ‘The masonic plans for final destruction of Christianity: multi-culture’, ‘Arguments used by Freemasons for the necessity of employment of foreign workers in Poland’, and even ‘The masonic movement, the Kabbalah and Olga Tokarczuk’ (Tokarczuk was the Nobel Prize in Literature laureate in 2019).

WARSAW. On 25th April during an online discussion about the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, as they may relate to the suspension and possible rescheduling of matches by the Polish Ekstraklasa football league, fans of **Legia Warszawa** team disseminated conspiracy theories with antisemitic threads. One of the comments reads as follows: ‘a normal fan is happy, but a gang of KODers [referring to the acronym, KOD – in Polish: the Committee for the Defence of Democracy, a civic organization and NGO – translator’s note], lemmings [a term used to scoff at those who oppose the current ruling party – translator’s note] and corporations run by Jewboys insist on making life unbearable to people. Don’t pay attention. Those who dislike people with right leanings, who criticise and spit on our government, are paid lackeys of the kosher newspaper [a derogatory term used to describe the *Gazeta Wyborcza* daily newspaper – translator’s note], the Axel Springer group and other enemies of the Polish nation’. Another example reads: ‘I don’t give a f.ck because, as Herbert [a renowned Polish writer – translator’s note] wrote: «garbage goes with the flow». Here we have readers of that traitor, Miłosz, but what the hell... people subservient to Soros also write here. You know. These are the effects of actions by the kosher newspaper and TVN’. Some posts were of a xenophobic character and contained radical political slogans: ‘When that redhead, Tusk was in power, a great many young people emigrated from Poland and somehow nobody from the government at that time took any interest in them if only to keep some of them in Poland. It would best please those platformers [supporters of the liberal Civic Platform party – translator’s note] if they all left and they would absorb hordes of immigrants to replace them. Aha, so when you finally get the f.ck out of here, put the entire opposition with Schetyna [a liberal politician – translator’s note] into your trunk. Only take out the fork from his pocket if you know what I have in mind, you lemming full of that KOD shit, watching TVNSS24’. Posts also appeared with homophobic content, including: ‘You, as a young wildcat have Covid up your dick and probably it’s all the same to you whether your parents and grandparents will live through this or not. «Congratulations on your brilliance!» You see, not everyone is a fan of the Rainbow Alternative’.

WARSAW. On 25th April, **Grzegorz Braun**, a Member of Parliament representing the **Confederation** party, had a conversation with **Tomasz Sommer**, editor-in-chief of the **Najwyższy Czas** (‘High Time’) weekly, which was posted on **YouTube** with the title: *Will they brand us with the mark of the beast?* The two mused over conspiracy theories related to the COVID-19 pandemic, citing Hollywood disaster movies and academic conferences warning about epidemics (including by the Rockefeller Foundation) as evidence that the pandemic was planned. Tomasz Sommer saw in these films the “prefiguration of a world government” asking: “Maybe the organs of the real power, as foreseen in conspiracy theories, are only now coming out in some manner?” to which Braun replied: “All this is being fulfilled right now, with an even greater impetus and horror. This reaches with its roots to inhuman theories, for which Protestantism served as the incubator. It should be remembered that Malthusianism, Darwinism, all this would not have come to be without

the revolution of Luther and the revolution of masonic lodges in the eighteenth century. They thrived on that ground and attained power ruling souls and bodies. These are people like Bill Gates, and we have to deal with a war which is fought on several fronts [...]. The stage artist, Madonna joined Bill Gates recently. [...] There is talk about looking for a vaccine, but nothing is said about looking for medication that would relieve the discomfort generated by that problematic and legendary virus. [...] And here in our own country and in the rest of the world we hear from unquestioned experts that they doubt the reality of this virus as a phenomenon in human history, and doubt the reality of the pandemic. I cannot divulge the name because my interlocutor demanded anonymity in the course of our internal seminar of the council of the leaders of the Confederation party [...], but the basic facts are a subject of controversy.” Braun went on to say: “The force of cosmopolitan projects is becoming real. [...] The question who will rule whom [...], the American – let’s use the professional, classical term – Jewcommies are trying to use the struggle against Coronavirus to get rid of Trump who has done so much for the Jewish cause in the world. [...] We could count all his family’s ties. [...] The totalitarian globalists have managed to get their principles to work in most countries on this globe”. He added: “Bill Gates is heading for a situation in which each person on this globe will need to legitimise his or her existence with a certificate of kosher standard [that is how Braun referred to the certificate of being vaccinated against COVID-19 – translator’s note] and to be monitored [...]. In Liechtenstein this pilot programme has already been launched. [...] We are seeing a return to the realities of life which in our world were most recently known in the 1930s in Soviet Ukraine, when internal passports were reintroduced. [...] A comparison between us and the Stalinist epoch shows that we are worse because we are agreeing to all of it without mass shootings [...], because not all are feeling humiliated by the brutalisation which forces us to wear face masks!” In the course of Braun’s tirade, Sommer butted in with the following statement: “In this discussion there appeared a figure with a history of 2000 years, the mark of the beast” to which Braun responded: “But of course [...], some have already warned that the popularisation of the bar code is a threshold of this hell, of the apocalypse, but now it is absolutely clear that these figures are not overrated, that [...] it is being made true right now before our very eyes [...] that some pilot programmes were already put in motion long ago. There are people who have let themselves be implanted with electronic elements allowing themselves to be localised. The entire technology is already in place. The modus operandi is there and under the pretence of combatting Coronavirus, the stage of infrastructure development is being carried out. [...] It’s no coincidence that in the Polish anti-virus shield, 5G masts have appeared to fight Coronavirus. Elon Musk, the next rider of the Apocalypse, besides Gates, Madonna and Mark Zuckerberg predicts the launching of satellites by the thousand, so that there won’t be a place where Big Brother cannot see us. [...] This is no conspiracy theory, no hypothesis [...], this is happening right now before our eyes, notice that intensified movement in the sky can be observed each evening [...] you can see the hordes of shining light objects flying with angular speed which is not accessible by airplanes [...]. I recommend looking in the sky in the direction of Ursa Major, I have observed this movement in the last few days”.

WARSAW. On 26th April, the state television news channel, **TVP Info** broadcast a programme which casted doubt over the version of the COVID-19 origin determined by the World Health Organization (WHO). Participants on the programme suggested that the virus had been manufactured in a Chinese laboratory. **Joshua Philipp**, introduced as an American investigative journalist writing for **Epoch Times** on the programme which was hosted by **Michał Rachoń**, stated that his knowledge “abolishes the whole theory” on the subject. Polish viewers were not informed, however, that **Epoch Times** is closely linked with the international Falun Gong movement and is often connected with the American ‘alt-right’ tendency. It has on numerous occasions supported conspiracy theories, including those which oppose vaccinations, as well as actions of the far right in Europe (for example, in Germany the local branch of **Epoch Times** is known for its support of the

ideology of the nationalist **Alternative for Germany** party – AfD). Also connected with Epoch Times is **Hanna Shen**, a Pole living in Taiwan who has appeared numerous times as a commentator on the topic of the pandemic on TVP Info and other Polish media, such as **Polish Radio, TV Republika, Gazeta Polska, Radio Wnet**, and the Internet television channel, **Idź pod Prąd** ('Go Against the Tide') run by pastor **Paweł Chojecki**, leader of the **Church of New Covenant**.

WARSAW. On 26th April, the **wRealu24** channel on **YouTube** broadcast a program entitled *Controlled chaos!? Chaos and vaccinations are coming! What about the elections?* in which the host, **Piotr Szlachtowicz** and the invited guest **Marcin Dybowski** (a long-time activist and publisher of ultra-rightist books, the owner of the antisemitic bookshop Antyk) disseminated conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 pandemic. Opening the discussion, Szlachtowicz made the following statement: *"People are beginning to see that in reality there doesn't seem to be anything in this pandemic and that someone has played a hoax on them"*, to which Dybowski replied: *"Someone is going to get rich on those face masks while we are still being terrorised"*. He also cast doubt on the very existence of COVID-19: *"If it were visible, we would assess for ourselves how real it is"*. Later in the conversation, Szlachtowicz presented such a vision: *"It's already known that the entire population will have to wear identity bracelets. [...] Where are we heading? How are we to protect ourselves from this?"*. Dybowski answered in a similar tone: *"If we do not protect ourselves right now [...] in a moment there will be such a situation that someone from the upper echelons will conclude: alright, so it looks like they are softened to such an extent, so frightened that we will now introduce bracelets. The idea with bracelets shows how this can be done if the population can be tyrannised."* He went on to lament: *"We are already at this moment disarmed. We are no longer the brave Polish nation of old, which had to be treated by all with respect"*.

KRAKÓW. On 27th April, Regional School Superintendent, **Barbara Nowak** tweeted a comment suggesting that the LGBT community is more dangerous than the COVID-19 epidemic: *'Warnings against the effects of gender ideology and LGBTQ+ are ignored by many, including some politicians of the right. What they call crazy is standard in the West. We will get over the virus fast, but what about gender?'*. She then added an unsourced image on which gender reassignment surgery was branded *'damaging of children'*.

KRAKÓW. On 27th April, a witness and a friend of the victims described the racist attitudes experienced by people of Asian origin in the preceding weeks. At the beginning of February, the staff of one of the local restaurants told several customers who had Asiatic facial features to leave the premises. The customers were Chinese, accompanied by a Polish friend. They were ordered to leave as *"they can have the virus and they make other customers feel uncomfortable"*. In March, a Japanese woman who was shopping with her child was spat on by an unidentified woman. A security guard witnessed the incident, but failed to intervene and turned his back on the victim. None of the other customers reacted either. This story was posted on Twitter in response to a Polish Radio reporter in China, who had warned against racist attacks.

POLAND. On 27th April, the weekly *Przeгляд* published an article about signs of animosity towards people of Asian origin, in connection with the COVID-19 epidemic. The text stated that: *'All these incidents took place soon after the virus spread to Poland, even before introduction by the government of the first restrictions'*. Here are some of the notable incidents:

- *"On 1st February I was in a McDonald's when a group of teenagers began recording me on their mobile phones. Words reached my table such as «Corona» and «Chinaman», and when I was passing close to them, they covered their faces with their shirts as if they were putting on facemasks and began to cough. When I was leaving, I heard loud sighs of relief. On another occasion, in a doctor's waiting room, in line to be vaccinated, a little girl began to whisper to her mother,*

frightened: «Chinaman, Chinaman». Maybe she felt a correlation that if she saw an Asian coming to the doctor, it must have something to do with Coronavirus” (told by a Japanese man who has been living in Poland for thirteen years),

- A Chinese woman living in Poznan was accosted by three teenagers who rode around her on bicycles, pretending to cough. Later, a man on the street spat on her,

- “One day I was riding on a bus to the university when a woman looking close to thirty years old sat beside me. She looked at me and then put on her facemask. She kept staring at me persistently while I tried to ignore her. Maybe she wanted to humiliate me and force me to get off the bus? I did not do that. She took out her rosary beads and began to pray. On another occasion, I was standing in line at a supermarket. Suddenly, I felt that the space around me was emptying. People were going over to stand in different lines” (told by a psychology student of Vietnamese origin),

- “Towards the end of January, I went with a friend to a pub. At that time the virus topic was still distant, I did not even think of it at all. Some guys looking about thirty years old approached my friend: «Why do you stick with these f.cking Chinese, they spread the virus!» He answered them that I did not come from China but they rebutted: «Doesn't matter, an Asian is an Asian, they're all the same»” (told by the same psychology student of Vietnamese origin),

- “I was doing shopping at Rossmann [...] From the corner of my eye I spotted that a guy standing near was gaping at me, as if he were in a shock. I thought to myself: am I doing something wrong? What's going on? And then I heard: «so, it's coronavirus»... The media carry just one topic every day: the Chinese virus, disease in China. So, I think that when people see an Asian, they immediately see that person as a spreader of disease” (story told by a woman of Vietnamese origin),

- “Once on a streetcar a junior high school girl, some thirteen to fourteen years old came up to me. She said «F.cking Asian!». When I looked at her, she went away. In my opinion such attacks are the results of panic in connection with the virus” (story told by a Korean man who has lived in Poland for twelve years).

WARSAW. On 28th April, the **wRealu24 YouTube** channel broadcast a programme in which **Dr. Stanisław Krajski** talked about “freemasons within the Church”, and voiced xenophobic statements related to the COVID-19 pandemic. He used the following words to convince viewers that it was impossible to get infected while receiving Communion: “this question can be reduced to absurdity, that in the order of grace it is the body of Christ, but in the order of nature it is simply bread and that a virus can exist on bread – it is on this principle that non-consecrated hosts are manufactured in small factories and Ukrainians could be there, as well as somebody who is sick with cholera, a tuberculosis patient, or someone with a different disease”. Krajski, referring to his latest book, **Masoneria polska 2020** (‘The Polish Freemasonry 2020’), published by **St. Thomas Aquinus Publishers**, in which he presents conspiracy theories about the “masonic virus in the Church and a masonic fifth column within the Church”, criticised the limitations placed on the number of people present during masses: “If God wants us to be infected here or there, it is His decision”.

WARSAW. On 28th April, the **wRealu24** channel on **YouTube**, broadcast another programme pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic, which served as a pretext to presenting insulting and antisemitic content. Viewers were encouraged to call the studio, and they voiced such statements as: “Poles are a nation ridden with Jews, a nation of Pharisees”, “we would have to give up our real estate to Jews, to give it away. And the only way to do it is to pacify Poles. That means to subdue them by any method, as long as they don't protest and they let anything be done to themselves” (a reference to alleged Jewish claims against Poland which is a popular motif in the antisemitic propaganda of the extreme right, who allege that the pandemic is serving to divert public attention from that subject), and “They got the message from the Mossad bunker with instructions

what to do” (a comment about the government policy during the pandemic). The host of the programme, **Piotr Szlachetowicz** expressed his disappointment at the fact that the owner of a car with a bumper sticker reading ‘*Poland not Polin*’ is being “*hailed through the courts on account of his camper*” (the car was shown publicly with others on 27th January 2019 at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum during the commemoration of the camp’s liberation. The director of the museum reported this at the time to the District Prosecutor, citing the incitement of hate on nationalistic grounds, as seen on the car owned by **Krzysztof A.** On 5th July, by the decision of the Regional Prosecutor’s Office in Kraków-Krowdrze, the case was closed. The director of the museum appealed the decision, but the closing was upheld on 2nd December 2019 by the Regional Court in Oświęcim).

POZNAŃ. On 29th April, a Twitter user posted a photograph of a large sign which had appeared near the Pestka shopping mall, reading: ‘*Face masks made in China? So this is your capitalism!*’ and a Celtic Cross – a symbol of the so-called ‘white race’ used by extreme nationalist groups. The combining of anti-capitalist and xenophobic mottos and symbols is characteristic of radical neo-fascist groups, including the so-called **Autonomous Nationalists**.

WARSAW. On 29th April on the **wRealu24 YouTube** channel, another conversation was broadcast which contained conspiracy theories related to the COVID-19 pandemic, this time with racist undertones. The video was titled: *Shocking INFO from Africa in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic? Are we witnessing a global hoax?* The guest of the programme hosted by **Marcin Rola** was **Daniel Witowski**, an activist of the **Youth Forum of Law and Justice** and assistant to Member of Parliament, **Tomasz Rzymkowski** (who until recently was associated with the **National Movement** and the **Kukiz’15** party). When Witowski talked about his stay in Senegal, Rola reacted in the following manner: “*I associate Africa with backwardness where Negroes run around without shoes, there is no health service whatsoever, they have to walk with these water gourds. There this pandemic should be spreading, and the death toll should be high*”. In a later part of the conversation Rola shared a conspiracy theory: “*Are we not witnessing, first of all such a pandemic of fear brought on by the media, and second of all such a huge, total, global hoax?*” Answering the host, Witowski stated: “*I began to wonder whether someone could profit from this coronavirus pandemic. Without a doubt I would point to China. [...]. We should consider what the approach of the Chinese authorities is. There are millions of people who could perish, which is no great loss to China. If it afflicts seniors, these would be people receiving old age pensions*”.

ŚWIDNIK. On 29th April, a homophobic incident took place during charitable work for the county Centre for Crisis Intervention, organised by activists of the Equality March Association from Lublin. Representatives of the LGBT organisation made a charitable gesture of presenting the centre with face masks to protect users against COVID-19. They handed the masks to officials in the presence of journalists who had been informed about the event. When the face masks were handed over and distributed, the head of the centre, **Małgorzata Mądry** unexpectedly forbade the journalists present from using photographs documenting support for the centre from the LGBT community. In a curiously worded statement to the local press, she offered the reasons for her decision: “*Both I and my co-workers were convinced that the face masks were the initiative of a sewing company from Świdnik*”. When asked by a journalist whether she would have agreed to accept the face masks if she had known who exactly would bring them, Małgorzata Mądry answered: “*I don’t know what we would have done*”. The situation was also addressed by the Equality March Association on its Facebook profile: ‘*This is how the LGBT-free zones look in practice. It is important to emphasise that the centre had no problem with the photograph, they knew from the outset with whom they were talking, but an hour later the head of the centre called to withdraw permission to publish the photo and announced that she wanted to return the face*

masks'. Towards the end of March 2019, the local County Council in Świdnik adopted a homophobic declaration: *'The Świdnik county is free of LGBT ideology'*. It included an opposition against *'homo-propaganda'* (an insulting term used in relation to actions promoting the human rights and safety of sexual minorities).

MAY 2020

WARSAW. On 1st May, on the **wRealu24** channel on **YouTube**, a programme was broadcast in which both the host **Marcin Rola**, as well as his guest **Witold Rosowski** (a Polish-American activist who was a candidate in the 2019 parliamentary elections representing the **Confederation** party) voiced conspiracy theories related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rosowski said: *"With regards to the virus, both versions, that it was specially designed and set free on us for someone who made this or financed it to profit – this version is just as feasible as the one that this virus simply got out on the wings of a bat from this laboratory in Wuhan [...]. This coronavirus first of all strengthened such groups whose aim is to form a world government. [...] They created such a testing ground, how to do it, so that all power could be concentrated in the hands of one global gang. They carried out a war game of sorts using this coronavirus"*. In his tirade Rosowski also stated that: *"The biggest profiteer of this coronavirus is the deep state. [...] The aim is to bring the US economy to a state of ruin in order to oust Donald Trump"*.

WARSAW. On 1st May in a programme broadcast on the **wRealu24** channel on **YouTube**, the pop singer and celebrity, **Ivan Komarenko** voiced conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 pandemic and pharmaceutical companies. He stated: *"This entire adventure which we are currently going through was pre-planned [...] by pharmaceutical companies, including the WHO"*. He added that the emergence of COVID-19 would be an advantage to the pharmaceutical industry: *"Within a short time, they understood that they could only profit by this, so they started to create a pandemic of fear around it, They asked the government for grants and help in financing. The government after a short time realised that this is really no pandemic at all."* Asked by the host, **Marcin Rola** whether COVID-19 was a *"global hoax"*, he answered in the affirmative. Komarenko also alluded to the topic of vaccination against COVID-19, decidedly protesting its future introduction: *"Again those wretched vaccines, under force. How can you vaccinate everybody? How can you run such an experiment on the entire nation?"*. In the course of the conversation Komarenko also stated that in the upcoming presidential elections he would vote for **Krzysztof Bosak** from the **Confederation** party.

POLAND. During the first half of the month of May, the Internet carried numerous offensive commentaries aimed at Silesians and Germans in connection with the high rate of Coronavirus infections in the Silesian administrative district, as compared to other districts. Below are a few examples of comments posted on **Twitter**:

- *'It's probably because – as expected of Silesians – hygienic and disinfection standards are not being followed, same as Germans, so they have similar infection numbers'*
- *'I don't feel sorry for the Upper Silesian pro-German supporters'*
- *'Hanysy [a once derogatory but later reclaimed name for the people of Upper Silesia – translator's note], as we know, don't like to wash their hands or use water at all if they can avoid it. So [upper – translator's note] Silesia is ill, and the nearby culturally and civilizationally superior Zagłębie region, which has very few cases'*
- *'Silesia should be cordoned off, or else the second wave of infections will spread to the whole of Poland. Today in Krynica Morska I saw cars with Silesian license plates, they will spread the virus everywhere'*
- *'Close Silesia! Station tanks on roads!'*

- 'Wouldn't it be easier to bomb them?'
- 'Silesia is an abnormality'.

WARSAW. On 3rd May, during a programme about the COVID-19 pandemic broadcast by **Niezależna Polska Telewizja NPTV** ('Independent Poland TV') on **YouTube**, **Wojciech Olszański** (appearing under the pseudonym of **Aleksander Jabłonowski**) made death threats towards at a viewer who was positively inclined to vaccinations: *"I will find you and I will f.ck off our head with my French bayonet, you son-of-a-bitch. That asshole, he wants to get vaccinated! It's because of people like you that we will have a civil war here, you idiot, you moron. I talk to policemen, they ask me: Wojtek, what should we do? [...] what'll it come to? I say, we'll be f.cking away at one another. I sympathise with you guys, because you will have to choose in your own conscience whose side you are on. Because of such a shithead who wants to get vaccinated. Go, get yourself vaccinated, kick the bucket, but don't cry for help, you human louse, you cockroach, go, get vaccinated! Go, stick your head up Gates' ass. [...] We won't let ourselves be pushed into railway wagons, sealed and driven to concentration camps"*. In the same programme Olszański voiced opposition to the so-called '447' Act - a reference to so-called American Act no. 447 which in Poland is used by adherents of the extreme right as a pretext to propagate antisemitic conspiracy theories. Olszański was dressed in a uniform with national and nationalistic emblems. The former professional actor, who had performed in the Polish National Theatre and in big-screen films, has been voicing racist, antisemitic and anti-Ukrainian views on YouTube with impunity for several years.

WARSAW. On 6th May, during a speech in the Polish Parliament, **Grzegorz Braun**, a Member of Parliament representing the **Confederation** party made threats of death by hanging to the Minister of Health, Łukasz Szumowski, with reference to sanitary measures introduced in the preceding weeks in connection with the COVID-19 epidemic. Braun said: *"Free the nation out of quarantine. If you do it now, maybe you will somehow get away with it, maybe not all of you will get to face the Tribunal of State. Maybe Minister Szumowski will not be hanged from a lamp post by the people of Warsaw on Three Crosses Square"*. Braun's speech was cut short by the Speaker of Parliament, and his threats were condemned by representatives of other parliamentary groups. Grzegorz Braun is an activist of the extreme right, who has been particularly involved in promoting hateful conspiracy theories connected with the COVID-19 pandemic.

WARSAW. On 7th May, appearing on the **wRealu24** channel on **YouTube**, the programme's host **Marcin Rola** and **Stanisław Michalkiewicz**, a journalist associated for many years with **Radio Maryja**, voiced conspiracy theories related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rola stated that *"many people simply think that this is one big pandemical hoax, designed to destroy nations and their economies"*, to which Michalkiewicz replied: *"Governments are taking on dictatorial powers, at the same time some ideas are implemented, and it's difficult to believe that they were not included in the plan. [...] This whole thing is being directed by someone from behind the scenes because it is clearly visible that the epidemic will end when it will be convenient"*. Michalkiewicz argued: *"Please note that the epidemic caused the coming to life of all the goals of the communist revolution which is rolling through Europe and North America"*. Michalkiewicz also pointed to war against the church as an alleged motive: *"This is a huge step on the road to eliminating the Catholic Church from public space"*. In the course of the programme, Michalkiewicz also called Robert Biedroń, a leftist candidate in the 2020 Polish presidential elections *"the leader of Polish sodomites"*.

WARSAW. On 7th May, **Grzegorz Braun**, a Member of Parliament representing the **Confederation** party, appearing on **wRealu24**, a **YouTube** channel, once again voiced conspiracy theories about

the COVID-19 pandemic. He referred to, amongst other things, the question of the alleged “*Jewish claims*” against Poland: “*If you think that coronavirus has caused an annulment of programmed interference of the Eurokolhoz [a derogatory term used to describe the European Union – translator’s note] in Polish affairs, you would be mistaken. If anyone thought that coronavirus caused the Jewish state and the Jewish diaspora to forget their most insolent claims against Poles, it would also be a mistake*”. Referring to his scandalous statement in Parliament on 6th May in which he made threats of death by hanging towards the Minister of Health, Łukasz Szumowski, Braun once again stated: “*I am kindly and courteously warning that such things have happened in history, and [...] I think that he [Minister Szumowski – translator’s note] should find a safe place for himself as soon as possible, best under the prison cell on Rakowiecka street [a street in Warsaw known for the state prison it hosts – translator’s note]. There we could at least be more or less certain that he will live to see the moment when he can face the State Tribunal, as well as common courts of law*”.

WARSAW. On 8th May, the singer **Edyta Górniak** appeared on the **YouTube** channel, **wRealu24**, which is known for propagation of content which is antisemitic, xenophobic, and insulting towards sexual minorities, and more recently for promoting conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 pandemic. In a conversation with the host, **Marcin Rola**, the celebrity explained why she contacted wRealu24 herself: “*I wanted to thank the editors for having the courage to raise the difficult topic of global manipulation, as well as such thorough analysis of current problems. This is invaluable help in upholding a realistic view of the situation, as well as awakening us and broadening our awareness*”. She also added that during the pandemic: “*this material which I have watched on your programmes, and then watched again and again, has strongly reinforced my feelings and my convictions*”. In the course of the interview, Górniak, when asked by Rola about the epidemic, whether “*somebody is behind this on a global scale?*” replied: “*In a decisive way this is no coincidence, all this that’s happening*”. She alleged that the people behind the pandemic were “*globalists*”. The singer declared herself to be an opponent of vaccinations against infectious diseases: “*There is some aim in it to intimidate people. I think that it is connected with a law to make vaccinations mandatory. [...] As long as I live, I will not allow myself to be vaccinated. If it does become mandatory, I swear to you that I would rather forsake this world than let anyone inject anything that I do not know into my body [...]. I will not allow my child to be vaccinated, nor will I myself be vaccinated, and if that meant annihilation to us, then hard luck*”.

WARSAW. On 8th May, skirmishes occurred in the vicinity of Warsaw Central railway station during a street protest against sanitary restrictions imposed to combat the COVID-19 epidemic. Some of the speakers during that demonstration voiced conspiracy theories, for example: “*This battle is being fought about 447. We don’t even have any idea what is being prepared for us behind the scenes. They are pitting us against ourselves*” [‘447’ was a reference to the so-called American Act no. 447 which in Poland is falsely represented by adherents of the extreme right as a demand to pay alleged “*Jewish claims*” – translator’s note], “*In the autumn, Szumowski [Minister of Health – translator’s note] already planned two parallel epidemics for us*” and “*We don’t want to be vaccinated! They will f.ck a needle with a chip into our bodies, so that they know everything about us*”. Some statements also connected the spread of COVID-19 with the implementation of the 5G network: “*They put up 5G antennas, people will drop dead like flies. And what will they do then? They’ll say that the pandemic is back. [...] They will crash into every home and vaccinate each person, even those who do not agree to it*”. A number of public figures participated in this event, including **Grzegorz Braun**, a Member of Parliament representing the **Confederation** party, and **Piotr Rybak**, who had been convicted for burning an effigy of a Jew in Wrocław in 2015. Rybak repeatedly shouted the word, “*Judases!*” at policemen over a megaphone during the protest.

TORUŃ. On 9th May, **Fr. Tadeusz Rydzyk**, director of **Radio Maryja** protested against sanitary restrictions connected with the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic, stating during his broadcast: *“This is a cooling down of religiousness. They have created a panic and people have got frightened. They said: don’t enter churches, only five people at a time [...]. I understand that it is important to adhere to certain hygienic regulations, and that health is important, but to us Christians, Catholics, the health of the soul is more important. We have everlasting life”*. Rydzyk also presented a conspiracy theory, asserting that *“anti-evangelical centres are using every occasion to destroy faith, even now”*. He appealed: *“Let us not give in in Poland. To me, to my faith it was unacceptable, that they have closed off churches, but left stores open. [...] We must think it over and see where we will let ourselves be pushed – pardon the expression – into a sewage drain of evil”*.

WARSAW. On 9th May, **TVP Info**, a Polish state-run television channel, broadcast a thirty-minute conversation with **Steve Bannon**, an idol of the international far-right movement, and of the so-called alt-right, and former advisor to Donald Trump. The host, **Michał Rachoń** introduced Bannon with words of admiration, stating that he was an *“excellent documentary and filmmaker, as well as the author of one of the most interesting media projects currently in existence in the world, namely the podcast, War Room: Pandemic”*. Bannon presented an extreme, ideological conspiracy theory on the COVID-19 pandemic, using military rhetoric. He stated: *“The full responsibility for this attack rests with the Chinese Communist Party, [...] responsibility for this terrible tragedy which has caused the deaths of over 200,000 people worldwide”*. Turning to Polish viewers, he used the opportunity to present China as a scapegoat for economic hardship: *“I am sure that countries such as Poland will feel the results for at least another decade. Please remember that if you’ve already lost your job, if your employer pays you less because of the present situation, or if you are generally worse off, you should blame the Chinese Communist Party. This is really a serious matter, and I think that every leader in every country in the world should listen when the commander in chief of the US Armed Forces [the President – translator’s note] says that we have been attacked just like at Pearl Harbour and this time the Chinese are responsible”*. Rachoń then asked: *“So is the Western world at war with China?”*, to which Bannon replied: *“The Chinese Communist Party is in a state of war against the West and has been for the last ten years [...]. The real dark days are ahead, [...] now they are turning to a kinetic type of war. [...] This was like an order of assassination. The death of each person, each nurse, each doctor can be blamed on the Chinese Communist Party”*. He also added: *“I do not believe in conspiracy theories, but I don’t believe in coincidences either. [...] The World Health Organization shares the blame. [...] They are 100 percent responsible for each death. [...] Beijing must pay - this has to be forced on them”*. He continued: *“The Chinese Communist Party has bought out the majority of London’s downtown”*. He then equated the current Chinese government with **Hitler** and **Mussolini**, with whom a confrontation was inevitable, and said: *“This is our goal, our destiny”*. He also added with pride: *“I am a populist and an economic nationalist”*. Rachoń stated that Bannon’s podcasts, titled *War Room: Pandemic* fulfil *“the exact same function”* as Radio Free Europe during the Cold War. Neither Bannon nor Rachoń mentioned the negligence of the American administration and the playing down of COVID-19, which has contributed to the pandemic in the United States reaching a tragic scale.

LUBLIN. On 15th May, on the **YouTube** channel of radical right-wing internet television **Idź Pod Prąd** (‘Go Against the Tide’) pastor **Paweł Chojecki** (leader of the religious group known as **Kościół Nowego Przymierza** [‘Church of the New Covenant’]) attacked Polish footballer Robert Lewandowski, while promoting xenophobic conspiracy theories. The channel regularly refers to the coronavirus as ‘the Chinese plague’ and promotes a conspiracy theory about its origin. Against scientific evidence, it accuses the Chinese of intentionally producing and spreading the virus. It advocates a military conflict with China and announces, in the words of its head Paweł Chojecki, ‘the war against the Chinese communists is starting to take shape’. In this context, Robert

Lewandowski was attacked for having participated in an advert for a popular Chinese smartphone brand. Chojecki has called for a boycott of Poland's national team captain by fellow players and media: 'It is shameful for our leading player, at the moment when a life and death war is underway against the criminals who have the blood of over 100 million people on their hands (...) Mr Lewandowski agrees to be a Europe-wide ambassador for the Chinese communists, it is a shame and a disgrace for the Polish sports, no Polish sportsman should shake hands with Mr Lewandowski and no Polish journalist should pay any attention to his utterances'. Chojecki failed to mention that as early as March of this year, the Bayern Munich striker with his wife Anna donated one million Euro to the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. In the same broadcast on 15 May, Chojecki attacked the 'NEVER AGAIN' Association, Polish President Andrzej Duda, and Pope Francis who was labelled as 'a heathen who celebrates Maoist Leninist rituals together with the communist comrades from China'. 'Go Against the Tide' is known for formerly employing **Marian Kowalski**, an ex-presidential candidate, largely gone from the public eye following a scandal. Its founder Paweł Chojecki is a longtime political activist on the radical right and a vice-chairman of the **11 November Movement** party.

LUBLIN. On 18th May, on the **YouTube** channel of radical right-wing internet television **Idź Pod Prąd** ('Go Against the Tide'), the presenter **Eunika Chojecka** along with her father **Paweł Chojecki** (leader of the religious group known as **Kościół Nowego Przymierza** ['Church of the New Covenant']) shared conspiracy theories blaming the Chinese for the alleged intentional creation and spreading of the coronavirus. During the programme, Paweł Chojecki claimed the "*Chinese communist government [...] invaded the whole world with coronavirus through the obvious infection of the Chinese and sending them all over the world*", underlining that "*China infected the world intentionally*". His daughter echoed similar theories: "*Communist China caused the global coronavirus pandemic*". His son, **Tymoteusz**, was also present in the studio and added: "*Even a remotely bright person today will know that China is behind the coronavirus*". During the programme Paweł Chojecki also targeted members of the "NEVER AGAIN" Association as well as Pope Francis, going so far as to say: "*he worships pagan gods. He is a person who claims the Catholics believe in the same God as the followers of Muhammad, so he is a spiritual crook*".

TORUŃ. On 21st May, in the radio and TV programme entitled *Unfinished conversations: Behind Coronavirus's back*, broadcast on far-right Catholic **Radio Maryja** and **TV Trwam** channel (hosted by **Fr. Benedykt Cisoń**), the radical right-wing activist and journalist **Wiktor Gadowski** presented his conspiracy theory about the human manufacturing of the coronavirus, claiming it had been created in a laboratory as a result of cooperation of Chinese and American scientists. He claimed Chinese people living in a suburban area of Warsaw, Wólka Kosowska, were hiding the true death toll by getting rid of dead bodies in secret. He sneered: "*so many Chinese live there and no one is dying?*". He presented his alleged observation that "*the pandemics in Europe exploded near areas known for Chinese business and trade*" (this information is false). At the same time, he questioned the validity of sanitary restrictions introduced due to the pandemic. Fr. Cisoń supplemented these statements, adding for example: "*there are claims that the coronavirus was invented by insurance companies, so that the elderly would die and would no longer need to be supported [...]. I would also like to return to the theories according to which the coronavirus is the opportunity to vaccinate and implant microchips in the whole of humanity, seven billion people, and all that paid for by the citizens and the countries obligated to carry out these procedures*". Radio Maryja's founder and leader, **Fr. Tadeusz Rydzyk**, also joined the broadcast expressing his support for "*exposing Bill Gates*" and issuing "*a warning against a global government*"; he also warned against "*anti-Evangelical centres [who] will use every opportunity*". In the same broadcast, lasting over an hour, Gadowski introduced viewers to the conspiracy theory known as pizzagate, which is the false claim

spread by the American far-right in 2016, according to which Hilary Clinton's cooperators allegedly created a human trafficking and child sex ring and met in secret to carry out criminal rituals in the basement of a New York pizzeria. These allegations have been discredited multiple times by credible sources, but the guest of Radio Maryja and TV Trwam presented them as reliable. The broadcast was then published on the website of Radio Maryja and the **YouTube** channel of TV Trwam.

Editors: Rafał Pankowski, Anna Tatar, Jacek Dzięgielewski

Translated by: Witold Liliental, Kevin McRobb, Iwona Dettlaff, Leszek Ścioch.

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The 'Brown Book' is a document which monitors crimes committed by neo-fascists and the extreme right, as well as racist, xenophobic, and homophobic incidents, and acts of discrimination in Poland. It has been run by the "NEVER AGAIN" Association continuously since 1996.

The initiator and creator of the 'Brown Book' for many years was the late Marcin Kornak (1968-2014), the founder of the "NEVER AGAIN" Association.

Contact information:

www.neveragainassociation.org

www.facebook.com/Respect.Diversity

www.twitter.com/StowNIGDYWIECEJ

e-mail: info@neveragainassociation.org

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