Though little is known about such initiatives, Soviet cultural and propaganda institutions attempted to reach directly the hearts and minds of East European societies in Moscow's new sphere of influence created after World War II. A number of Polish Jews who facilitated and mediated these efforts found themselves caught between Polish and Soviet anti-Semitism. This made their position extremely precarious. Yet the fact that Polish Jews really were overrepresented in both hard- and soft-power institutions of the oppressive party-state further reinforced older anti-Semitic stereotypes, thus complicating their work and the work of Soviet cultural outreach institutions. Discussions of post-war Polish and Soviet anti-Semitism have often focused on strictly national dimensions of the problem. Central to the recent dynamic and often polarized exchanges concerning linkages between Jews and communism in the post-war Polish context have been attempts to square various forms of anti-Semitism with contemporary observers' conflicting visions of Polish society and its past. Zooming out from and engaging with these important debates, Patryk Babiracki will discuss interactions between the Soviet officials, ethnic Poles, and Polish Jewish communists as a case study of how the Kremlin dealt with ethnic difference as it struggled to maintain its new empire.

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