

However, when the minority-filled Vilnius region fell into the hands of the Poles, demographically Lithuania became a predominantly Lithuanian state. The incentives to maintain the political balance and to continue to build institutional checks on the power of the majority became weak or nonexistent. Demographic and political checks disappeared. Nothing could deter Lithuanians from creating "Lithuania for Lithuanians," the pattern of majority dominance sweeping through all of Eastern Europe. In effect, the actual establishment of a sovereign state of Lithuania profoundly changed the previous cooperative ethnic boundary between Lithuanians and Jews within a relatively short period. The 1922 constitution failed to grant legal status to either the Jewish ministry or Jewish languages. By 1925, the Ministry for Jewish Affairs and the Jewish National Council had been abolished; of the long list of guarantees proclaimed in 1919, only the autonomous and state-funded Jewish educational system was actually implemented. After the 1926 coup, the state became more and more synonymous with the Lithuanian nation with almost no Jews in any branch of government or at the universities. For the many Jews living entirely within their separated religious community, Lithuanian political dominance in the bureaucracy and state was perhaps of little consequence. However, for secular or assimilated Jews, state policy meant a loss of opportunity. By the 1930s, Jews were clearly a subordinate people within the Lithuanian polity.

Several remarks can be made about the links between structural change, ethnic hierarchies, and ethnic violence. First, in the period of relative anarchy at the end of the First World War, Lithuanians did not use the opportunity to wreak massive violence against Jews. In the immediate aftermath of independence, Lithuanians and Jews clearly cooperated. In essence, two groups, both having been subordinate in the Russian Empire, became temporary allies.

Structural changes helped end this cooperation. Less importantly, the loss of Vilnius and its large Jewish population to Polish control changed the balance of power between the groups.<sup>21</sup> More importantly, the fact of Lithuanian sovereignty and the building of a Lithuanian nation-state profoundly changed the ethnic hierarchy. With the creation of a state came the need for a bureaucracy which needed to be staffed, a military with an

<sup>21</sup> Jews were assumed to be about 13% of the population if the Vilnius region was included. The 1923 census revealed that Jews were only about 7% of the total of truncated Lithuania. Figures for other minorities would also reveal declining proportions.

officer corps, a police force, and an official language. All of these would reflect Lithuanian dominance partly due to the large Lithuanian majority and partly due to policy.<sup>22</sup> This sense of being the dominant group would soon be shaken with another structural change – the Soviet occupation of 1940. An abrupt structural change would result in a reordering of an ethnic hierarchy.

### *The First Soviet Occupation*

The Soviet takeover in 1940 radically altered the Lithuanian social landscape, in some ways allowing a turning of the tables. Clearly, for Jews the Soviets were to be preferred to the Germans. Furthermore, the Soviet occupation created new opportunities in the government that had been previously closed off to Jews. In short, the Soviet occupation allowed at least a certain minority of Jews to free themselves from the fetters of the Lithuanian state's discriminatory policies. Levin sums up Jewish thinking upon the entry of the Soviets: "Between these two alternatives Lithuanian Jews had no real choice, and some Jews played a significant though by no means exclusive role in the Sovietization of Lithuania, taking managerial and official jobs shunned by Lithuanians. The genuine interests of both groups were clearly in conflict. Consequently, the Jews would later bear the brunt of the anger of patriotic Lithuanians."<sup>23</sup> Other sources describe the change that took place in more emotional terms. Describing the Soviet arrival, the words of one Jewish memoirist capture the switch of relationships and emotions that colored the Lithuanian-Jewish ethnic boundary and provide a preview of the Lithuanian response and the events of June 1941:

Every Jew held his head high. If he met a Lithuanian on the sidewalk, the Lithuanian would step off the curb to let him by. Before the Russians came, it had been just the reverse. The anti-Semites' eyes were popping out of their heads from the pressure of having to keep their mouths shut! But there were some who just couldn't hold their tongues. Even with the threat of never seeing the light of day

<sup>22</sup> A similar progression occurred in the other two Baltic states. During the early years of the new states, cooperation among ethnic groups held. The Estonian Law on Cultural Autonomy, passed in 1925, was considered exemplary for the time. By the 1930s, however, the guiding theme of the Ulmanis regime in Latvia, for example, had become "Latvia for Latvians." Although it should be said that the Latvian Constitution could be characterized as exceptionally tolerant.

<sup>23</sup> Levin, "Lithuania" p. 330.

again they still would take the risk and speak: Hey, you! Jew! You think that Stalin is your Daddy? You think you are in heaven? It isn't going to last! . . . There is a Jewish saying: 'If we are on the horse today, then the Lithuanians are ten feet under.' We would enjoy it while it lasted. What would happen later we didn't want to know. We lived for the day. But the anti-Semites knew what they were talking about; what they would show us we would remember for generations to come.<sup>24</sup>

Understandably, given the German alternative, many elements of the Jewish population greeted the Soviet arrival, and the end of Lithuanian sovereignty, with relief if not joy. Even in smaller cities, the reaction to the end of independent Lithuania differed between the two populations. The following is a passage from an interviewee who was a Lithuanian high school student in 1940:

I was young and sided with the Left. I thought a Communist regime would come to Lithuania. I heard beautiful stories about traveling over the plain in Russia, and so on. And then they came in 1940. I was secretary of my class at school and I was tempted to go out and greet them. When I saw who greets them, I saw that all my friends and all the general population, mostly farmers and workers, were standing in the distance, not waiting, but just standing. Their attitude impressed me to such a degree that I chose right away. Those that greeted them were different you see. It's very easy to become anti-Semitic, apparently anti-Semitic, when you try to portray the picture of what was happening there. Now the invaders are coming and they are greeting them and we are standing on the other side, and somehow this was not very acceptable, especially for young Lithuanians. We got some sort of a fear, that this minority was siding with them.<sup>25</sup>

Although the vast majority of the Jewish population would suffer along with Lithuanians, the visibility of Jews in the Soviet governmental apparatus worked to totally change perceptions of the ethnic hierarchy. Clearly, many Lithuanians believed that they had become subordinate to Jews. At the very least, Lithuanians were no longer dominant in the ethnic hierarchy simply on the basis of being Lithuanian.

Jews had not held a seat as minister or deputy minister for eighteen years, but during the first Soviet occupation they filled certain sections of the government and Party. The Minister of Industry as well as many of the highest officials of the Ministry of Industry were reported to be Jews.<sup>26</sup> Of commissars appointed to nationalize industry, Jews made up a propor-

<sup>24</sup> Harry Gordon, *The Shadow of Death: The Holocaust in Lithuania* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1992), p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> Interview Cl-2 from my own fieldwork.

<sup>26</sup> Juozas Prunskis, *Lithuania's Jews and the Holocaust* (Chicago: Lithuanian American Council, 1979), p. 13.

tion five times that of their numbers in the general population.<sup>27</sup> While holding only five of the twenty-one seats on the Central Committee, key city and regional Party positions were often held by Jews, and not only in Kaunas and Vilnius but also in the smaller cities of Panevezys, Sauliai, Birziai, Utena, and Taurage.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, as was known to the population, some of the top Lithuanian leaders of the Communist Party (Snieckus, Didziulis, Gailiavicius) were married to Jews, a fact that made them not "fully Lithuanian" in the eyes of many in the population.

The Jewish presence in the Komsomol was even higher than in other government organs. Moreover, the actions of these young Communists were very visible in the day-to-day life of the general Lithuanian population. Komsomol members worked as propagandists for the elections and Jews probably composed significant percentages of the Komsomol representatives on the electoral commissions (forty-six of sixty-five in Vilnius).<sup>29</sup> Komsomol youth were also sent into the countryside to organize "socialist competitions." Lithuanian peasants were forced to sit and listen to young Jews, who often spoke poor Lithuanian, on the merits of the Soviet state and how it would transform the countryside. Needless to say, these lectures were less than appreciated.<sup>30</sup>

More than any other aspect of Soviet rule, Lithuanians were outraged by their perception of the Jewish role in the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD). These important positions were only doled out to the most trusted elements in the prewar Lithuanian Communist Party, and since the tiny prewar Party had been disproportionately Jewish it was natural that some Jews would fill the ranks of the security organs. Gladkov, the supreme commander of the NKVD in Lithuania, was a Jew

<sup>27</sup> Dov Levin, "The Jews and the Socio-economic Sovietization of Lithuania, 1940-41" *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 17 (1987): 17-30.

<sup>28</sup> Dov Levin, "Jews in the Soviet Lithuanian Establishment, 1940-41" *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 10 (1980): 21-37.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32. For a more extensive treatment of these election campaigns, see Dov Levin, "The Jews and the Election Campaigns in Lithuania, 1940-41."

<sup>30</sup> Even within the Komsomol, relations between Jews and Lithuanians were not good. Levin reports the following memo from a Central Committee member visiting Panevezys: "Sitting by a table in the Komsomol club is a Jewish committee member and round him are Jewish comrades speaking Yiddish loudly, while on the other side of the club sits a Lithuanian committee member and round him are Lithuanian members speaking Lithuanian. The Jewish Komsomol members explained the phenomenon by saying that it is impossible to become friends with them (the Lithuanians) there." Levin, "Jews in the Soviet Lithuanian Establishment, 1940-41" p. 33. Other similar examples are cited.

and the names of his Jewish lieutenants were well known to many in the Lithuanian population: Finkelstein, Dembo, Rozauskas, Singeris, Sermanas, Todes, Komodos, Bloch, Margolinas, Slavin, and so on.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, Jews were perceived as taking significant numbers of the political positions within the Soviet Army in Lithuania.<sup>32</sup> As extensively discussed as follows, it was not the *number* of Jews who occupied these positions that is critical. Rather, the fact that Jews occupied any of these positions of authority at all is most crucial.

The Soviet regime was well aware of the impression being made upon the general Lithuanian population and took corrective measures.<sup>33</sup> Lithuanians were actively recruited into the Party to help promote some semblance of proportionality ("the policy of national cadres").<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the more symbolic posts, such as "elected" representatives to the national legislative bodies of the USSR were held almost exclusively for non-Jews. Only one of thirty-five designates to the Soviet and the Soviet of Nationalities was Jewish.<sup>35</sup> But the damage had already been done. The relations between Jews and Lithuanians had been poisoned and the deportations of mid-June 1941, associated by Lithuanians with Jews, were yet another blow. The following passage might be considered typical of the Lithuanian perception and interpretation of the relationship between Jews and the Soviet regime and is worth quoting at length:

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 22; Prunskis, *Lithuania's Jews* pp. 12–13; Algirdas Martin Budreckis, *The Lithuanian National Revolt of 1941* (Boston: Lithuania Encyclopedia in Press, 1968), pp. 17–18. Zvi Gitelman sees in this process a repetition of the early days of the Soviet Union: "Again, as in 1918–21 in the Soviet Union proper, the new regime relied on Jewish Communists to identify and arrest 'class enemies' and 'reactionary elements.' Naturally, this did not endear the Jews to the local populations, who had just lost their political independence, acquired only two decades earlier, to the Communists," from "The Soviet Union" p. 303. One might speculate that the Soviets preferred Jews in the most sensitive areas of the Party on grounds of controllability. Milovan Djilas made such a speculation after a meeting with Stalin: "He boasted of how 'Comrade Zhdanov purged all the Jews from the apparatus of the Central Committee!' – and yet he simultaneously lauded the Hungarian Politburo which at that time consisted almost entirely of Jewish emigres, which must have suggested to me the idea that, despite its covert anti-Semitism, the Soviet Government found it convenient to have Jews at the top in Hungary because they were rootless and thus all the more dependent upon its will." *Conversations with Stalin* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), p. 171.

<sup>32</sup> Prunskis, *Lithuania's Jews* p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Gitelman sees the replacement of Jews from visible positions as common across the newly occupied regions. See Gitelman, "The Soviet Union" p. 303.

<sup>34</sup> Levin, "Jews in the Soviet Lithuanian Establishment, 1940–41" p. 28.

<sup>35</sup> Levin, "Jews and Election Campaigns" p. 46.

## In the Wake of Barbarossa

If you had only seen what happened when the Soviet tanks entered Lithuania. The Lithuanians wiped away their tears, while the Jews took great efforts to come out to throw flowers to the tank divisions at the risk of falling under the caterpillars. Their joy knew no end!

With the establishment of Soviet power in Lithuania the Jews' influence and position grew extraordinarily. In many government departments there were only Jews. They interfered in everything and told everyone how to live. Jewish agitators flooded the villages. They called upon the peasants to begin the sowing or the reaping. The people were silent and bit their tongues. But as soon as the agitators left, the people began to spit in rage: Of what value is the advice of a person who had never in his life held a scythe in his own hands, who had never pushed a plow in his life. . . .

All this led to the fact that Lithuanians, who had lived peacefully for centuries together with the Jews, in the course of a single year literally came to hate them. Almost no one among the people spoke of "Soviet power"; people spoke of "Jewish power." Those who collaborated with the authorities were called Jewish grovellers.

The Jews went too far. Only this can explain their behavior. Many people have told me how the Jews at that time cried out to the Lithuanians: 'Yesterday it was you who governed, today – it is our turn!'<sup>36</sup>

When the Soviets fled the advancing German forces, constraints on violent action against Jews were lifted. Unlike earlier periods of Lithuanian history, this time a lack of constraints coincided with a desire to do violence.

## Returning to the Five Puzzles: Assessment of the Four Emotions

How should this desire to commit violence be explained? Which of the four emotion-based stories plausibly addresses the puzzles created by the variation of these Baltic events? Of the four emotions, Resentment possesses the most convincing overall fit with elements of Rage also plausible. This brief summary section first applies Resentment to the post-Barbarossa Baltic violence and then discusses Fear, Hatred, and Rage.

Following the links in Figure 2.1, the Soviet occupation of 1940 brought rapid structural change. Most critically, the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states ended Lithuanian sovereignty and ethnic dominance. The everyday experiences of meeting minority individuals on the street, of dealing with the bureaucracy, of encountering police, produced information that confirmed the new status relations. In turn, the change in ethnic hierarchy produced beliefs of injustice and emotions of Resentment. The

<sup>36</sup> A. Zuvintas, "An Open Letter to Tomas Venclova" *Cross Currents* 8 (1989): 62–67.

desire to put others "back in their place" was strong. With the collapse of Soviet rule in June 1941, these desires led to acts of violence that quickly resubordinated minority groups, especially Jews. The violence against Jews was highly emotional, immoral, and pathological. Yet, in terms of Resentment, it was instrumental and highly effective in accomplishing basic goals of much of the Lithuanian population.

*Why June 1941?*

Why was there brutal violence against Jews in June 1941 but not earlier? Before the political structure of the Lithuanian state had been firmly formed, Jews and Lithuanians were allies in a quest to end mutual subordination. Ethnic violence among those groups was not prevalent. During the 1920s and 1930s, the requirements of modernization strengthened perceptions of status hierarchy which were, in turn, affirmed through political policies and position-holding controlled by the majority group. The Soviet takeover of 1940 not only stripped Lithuania of its sovereignty, but, as indicated by the statements above, created a powerful perception of a status reversal. The sense of injustice produced by this status reversal was heightened by the fact that Jews were a relatively small minority with no tradition of occupying positions of authority, especially positions in the police. Aggression could and did serve to reduce Jews to a clearly subordinate position. The desire to reestablish dominance was intense.

*Vilnius versus Kaunas* Why was there little aggression in Vilnius? The ethnic target in Vilnius, as far as one existed, was the Poles. Until the first Soviet occupation, Poles had unquestionably been on top of the ethnic hierarchy in Vilnius. In the period immediately following the First World War, Polish administrators instituted Polish as the only language of administration in the Vilnius region; moreover, a commission composed entirely of Poles governed the district.<sup>37</sup> Of possible targets in Vilnius, the Poles were the greatest impediment to present and future Lithuanian status dominance. Far from being a blind, knee-jerk reaction against "ancient enemies" in a period of few constraints, the differentiation of targets indicates the instrumental nature of this ethnic conflict.

<sup>37</sup> See von Rauch, *The Baltic States: The Years of Independence 1917-1940* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974), pp. 101-02.

*Latvia, Estonia, and Belorussia* Why the variation among Belorussia, Latvia, and Estonia? Belorussians committed no similar outburst against its Jewish population. Of course, Belorussia had not been a sovereign state but only a federal unit within the Soviet Union; the strength of its ethnic hierarchy reflected that fact. There had been no "Belorussia for Belorussians" policy similar to that in the independent Eastern European states. It was not occupied in 1940 and experienced no status reversals. In short, aggression had no value in reordering a status hierarchy. This could not be said for the Baltic states. The situation in Latvia most resembled that of Lithuania in terms of change and perception of status reversal as well as the nature of the aggression against the Jewish minority. In Estonia, there is no evidence of a public mass action against the Jewish minority, but that minority had been so small (5,000 total) that it simply did not register on the ethnic hierarchy.

*Russians* Why was there little aggression against Russians as a group?<sup>38</sup> There are two reasons violence would not have the same utility in status reduction against Russians as against Jews. First, the Russian minority gains status from being connected to the tens of millions of Russians living next door. Aggression at the local level cannot affect this status. The same could not be said for Lithuanian Jews. Secondly, the sense of injustice incurred through subordination to the traditionally "weak" Jews is far greater than the sense of injustice produced by subordination to the traditionally "strong" Russians. Chapter 8 discusses the lack of violence against Russians at greater length, as does the section on Poland B as follows.

*Rabbis* Finally, why target Rabbis rather than the secular Jews who might actually have collaborated with the Soviet occupier? If, as Resentment posits, the value of aggression is in reducing the status of *groups*, then aggression should logically be targeted against the clearest symbols of those groups. Secular Jews could not be easily distinguished from Lithuanians, but Rabbis and other religious Jews were clear symbols of Jews as a group.

Resentment heightens the saliency of status concerns; it impels individuals to rectify correctable status imbalances. Resentment provides an answer for the overall pattern seen across the Baltic in the wake of Barbarossa – mass violence against Jews in Kaunas and the rest of inter-war Lithuania and Latvia, no mass violence against Jews in Vilnius (with

<sup>38</sup> There was, of course, a great deal of violence against Soviet officials, a group with many Russians; however, there is little evidence of action against Russians simply because they were Russians.

some action against Poles), or in Estonia and Belorussia. Resentment also explains the reversal of the World War One pattern. Recall that Jews had been attacked in Vilnius but not in Kaunas in that earlier period.

### *Fear and Hatred*

*Fear* definitely has little applicability. In the wake of Barbarossa, Lithuanians did not feel threatened by Jews. Any Jew who had possessed any political power or had access to weapons had probably fled with the Soviet regime. The conflict between Lithuanians and Poles in Vilnius might fit the *Fear* story. Both were in a position to contest the coveted Vilnius region. Lithuanian actions, however, were not a preemptive strike against Polish force potential, but rather intended to convince the Germans to maintain Lithuanian sovereignty of the region.

As defined previously, *Hatred* involves historical roles of enmity. As discussed previously, Lithuanian-Jewish relations were decent by regional standards. At the very least, no pervasive historical record of violent pogroms against Jews pervaded Lithuanian minds. During the reign of the Russian Empire, Lithuanians and Jews were two subordinate groups. Jews and Lithuanians were political allies twenty years earlier. The brutal and humiliating actions of Lithuanians were not the resumption of a historical pattern; indeed, they came as a shock to most of the Jewish victims. In the aforementioned quoted passages, the actors make reference only to recent events. They do not seem to be taking on historical roles embedded within a shared cultural schema. Furthermore, *Hatred*, as a general national cultural phenomenon, does not help explain the difference in Lithuanian behavior in Vilnius and Kaunas.

### *Rage*

As opposed to *Fear* and *Hatred*, *Rage* provides a plausible alternative narrative and is *Resentment's* major competitor. In assessing the explanatory merits of *Rage*, it is worthwhile to recall the defining features of the *Rage* narrative:

1. Often, a general or diffuse and largely unconscious source provides the basis for the emotion.
2. The emotion heightens a desire to lash out.
3. The emotion occurs prior to cognitive processes involved with finding a target. Identifiable distortions such as projection, attribution and others are likely to result.

### In the Wake of Barbarossa

4. The target may be a substitute target.
5. In opposition to *Hatred*, the justification for violence may lack a precedent.

Following Figure 2.3, *Rage* provides a general story that fits the events of June 1941. Here is a rendition. The Soviets eliminated the independent Lithuanian state. They deported the country's leadership in the summer of 1940. They nationalized property and planned to collectivize agriculture. Living standards fell. The Soviet secret police created an aura of fear and suspicion. The new regime elevated minorities into positions of power. The Soviets carried out a second deportation on June 13, 1941 only nine days before Barbarossa. Immediately before the German invasion, Moscow's regime deported over thirty thousand individuals (1% of the population) in an inhumane manner, characterized by the separation of families. Many went into hiding, and bitterness toward the Soviet regime greatly increased. Looking across an entire year of Soviet occupation, frustrations were numerous and diverse. In effect, cumulative frustration developed. From this general source, an emotion developed that motivated individuals to lash out. But against whom?

Continuing the *Rage* narrative, Lithuanians could not blame themselves or their own leaders for their misfortunes, so they looked for someone else to blame. Based on existing antisemitism, Jews were a natural target. Some Jews were active in supporting the Soviet Communist Party, some were even active in the secret police and government. At that point, cognitive distortions occurred in the form of attribution errors: The numbers of Jews active with the Communists were wildly distorted. Selective and distorted information collection then led to twisted beliefs. Everywhere Lithuanians looked they tended to see the myth of Judeo-Bolshevism coming to life.<sup>39</sup> A faulty conclusion was drawn – Jews are to blame. Certainly, no more than a small percentage of Jews were ever actively working with the Communists. The previous quotes indicate attribution errors. Further, even if prewar Lithuanian culture and history were “relatively” free of obsessive anti-Semitism, Lithuania was subject and home to Eastern European stereotypes of Jews; Lithuania's deeply Catholic culture was prone to Jew hatred that would help select Jews as a blameworthy target; Jews could be seen as inherently capable of evil and willing collaborators with an anti-Christian occupier.

<sup>39</sup> See Arno Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?*

With the coming of Barbarossa constraints disappeared. A high level of frustration and the ability to act converged. Rage was unleashed. Attacking Jews brought some relief to the frustrated Lithuanians.

Jews fit the profile of a substitute target, or at least a target that is both substitute and direct. Lithuanians immediately attacked as many Soviet functionaries as they could, but most of the Soviet administration had fled the country. This meant that the group most responsible for Lithuanian suffering, or the direct target, was largely unavailable. The frustration, cumulative and residual, remained and demanded outlet. Jews were an available, and vulnerable, substitute target; they were also partially a direct target in the sense that some Jews had taken positions in the Soviet apparatus. Clearly, Rabbis were not a direct target in any sense.

### *Evaluating Rage and its Relationship to Resentment*

The Rage narrative provides answers to some of the five puzzles. Rage has a ready answer for the fourth and fifth puzzles. Rabbis, and Jews in general, are a substitute target, an available and easy target in comparison to the fleeing Soviet functionaries or Russians. Regarding the first three puzzles, on the other hand, Rage does not provide such a ready solution. While the entire region suffered deprivation or frustration, Jews were not always a target of violence. They did not serve as scapegoat targets in Vilnius, in Belorussia, or in Estonia. Nor were Jews a consistent target of wrath across time; never before had such a mass of Lithuanians acted against them in such a violent manner.

In order to explain the wider pattern of variation, Rage would need to be supplemented with reference to other specific factors. For instance, Lithuanians may have felt the same levels of frustration in both Kaunas and Vilnius, but the lower percentage of Lithuanians in the latter served as a check on the release of that frustration. However, this explanation does not tell us why Poles and Lithuanians, together forming a majority of the Vilnius population, would not attack Jews (especially since attacks did occur in Vilnius in an earlier period of Polish control).

While the Rage narrative as a whole does not do as well as Resentment in explaining overall variation, it cannot be denied that elements of Rage were at work in Lithuanian violence against Jews. Antisemitism helped select the target and surely intensified the violence. Cognitive distortions occurred in processing information. The conclusion here is that antisemitism and attribution errors are important and, perhaps in some locations, critical elements within the Resentment path.

Despite possibilities for reconciliation and combination of these two paths, the essential conceptual differences between Rage and Resentment should be emphasized and clarified in light of this case. Perpetrators acting under the influence of Rage selectively use evidence and develop faulty or irrational beliefs. Resentment, in contrast, makes no reference to these phenomena. In the June 1941 case, the Rage story envisions the following belief: "Jews are responsible for the troubles of Lithuania and they should be punished." Resentment envisions a very different belief: "Jews occupy a position above Lithuanians and they should be brought down." The differences directly relate to essential conceptual issues regarding information processing and instrumentality.

Assume that 3% of the Jewish population and 1% of the Lithuanian population were visibly active in the Soviet administration.<sup>40</sup> Further assume that most of these individuals fled eastward at the beginning of Barbarossa. The question becomes why attack members of the 97% who were not active and who may have suffered under Soviet rule themselves? Rage provides two answers. First, these numbers do not matter because internalized frustration and the act of lashing out matter above all else. Perpetrators naturally develop a justification for their actions, but the story they tell themselves need not be firmly connected to actual events. The second answer is that cognitive distortions, especially attribution errors, greatly inflate these numbers – perpetrators perceive not 3% but rather 30% of the Jewish population as active. Both factors can operate together.

For Resentment, the question does not concern the overall percentage of the group that is engaged in action, but whether that action is able to change status relations. The relevant issue is whether the actions of the 3% changed the status of the group as a whole. Consider the quote: "Every Jew held his head high. If he met a Lithuanian on the sidewalk, the Lithuanian would step off the curb to let him by. Before the Russians came, it had been just the reverse." Although unconnected to the Soviet regime, group status changed for this Jewish memoirist – and apparently for many of the Lithuanians he encountered during the first Soviet occupation.

In this light, violence against the inactive 97% serves an obvious purpose. Even if the active 3% flee, the group status effects they created

<sup>40</sup> Or one could assume that equal percentages of the literate and urban populations joined the Communists. Those numbers would produce a far more skewed ratio of participation.

## Part Two: Comparisons

remain for the inactive 97%. In undoing those effects, and undoing them quickly, nothing is more effective than humiliation-tinged violence against symbolically significant group members. Thus, unsurprisingly, we witness public Lithuanian violence against rabbis.

Such violence is unjust; the victims bore no guilt. Justice, however, may have little to do with the emotions that drive group-based ethnic violence. For the individuals likely to commit violence, Resentment sees questions of individual guilt or innocence as far less motivating than the day-to-day experiences of domination/subordination. The emotion-based approach, especially in its Resentment form, emphasizes the compulsions that may be hardwired into human biology. In contrast, individual justice is largely a matter of human intellect and human agency. Intellect can overcome group-centered emotion, but it may not.

Which process occurred in the Baltic during the first Soviet occupation? The cognition-led, instrumental path of Resentment or the emotion-led, distortion-filled path of Rage? Undoubtedly, Rage and straightforward antisemitism drove many individuals toward violence. However, the Resentment story is also plausible and, critically, does a better job of explaining overall variation in targets. The following section provides more substantive material to compare the two paths.

### *Poland B: Similarities*

In the wake of Barbarossa, the situation in the Soviet-occupied territory of former Poland (Poland B) witnessed events similar to those just described in Lithuania: Jews were viciously attacked; the perpetrators justified their aggression with charges of Jewish collaboration with the Soviets. In one locality, Jews were forced to tear down a statue of Stalin, while in another a Jew was made to stand on a monument to Stalin while other Jews were forced to jeer him and shout "You are a stupid Stalin!"<sup>41</sup>

As in the Lithuanian case, some interesting patterns emerged within the overall event.<sup>42</sup> I am going to rely on Table 6.1 created by Andrzej

<sup>41</sup> Andrzej Zbikowski, "Local Anti-Jewish Pogroms in the Occupied Territories of Eastern Poland, June–July 1941" in Lucjan Dobroszycki and Jeffrey Gurock, eds., *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* pp. 173–79.

<sup>42</sup> For a collection of essays on the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland covering a range of topics, see Keith Sword, ed., *The Soviet Takeover of the Polish Eastern Provinces, 1939–41* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).

## In the Wake of Barbarossa

Table 6.1. *Anti-Jewish Pogroms that Resulted in Fatalities, Eastern Territories of Poland*

Region	Population	Number of Reports
1. Bolechow	Ukrainian	3
2. Boryslaw	Ukrainian	8
3. Borczow	Ukrainian	—
4. Brzezany	Ukrainian	2
5. Buczacz	Ukrainian and German	2
6. Czortkow	Ukrainian and German	3
7. Drohobycz	Ukrainian	5
8. Dubno	Ukrainian and German	1
9. Grodek Jag.	Ukrainian	1
10. Jaworow	Ukrainian	1
11. Kolomyja	Ukrainian	4
12. Korzec	Ukrainian	1
13. Korycin	Belorussian	1
14. Kowno	Lithuanian	2
15. Krzemieniec	Ukrainian	1
16. Lwow	Ukrainian	23
17. Radzilow	Polish	2
18. Sambor	Ukrainian	2
19. Sasow	Ukrainian	2
20. Schodnica	Ukrainian	1
21. Sokal	Ukrainian	1
22. Stryj	Ukrainian	3
23. Szumsk	Ukrainian	2
24. Tarnopol	Ukrainian	6
25. Tluste	Ukrainian	3
26. Trembowla	Ukrainian	2
27. Tuczyn	Ukrainian	1
28. Wizna	Polish	1
29. Woronowo	Lithuanian	1
30. Zaborow	Ukrainian	1
31. Zloczow	Ukrainian and German	4

Source: Accounts and memoirs in the archives of the Jewish Institute in Warsaw. Reprinted from Andrzej Zbikowski, "Local Anti-Jewish Pogroms in the Occupied Territories of Eastern Poland, June–July 1941" in Lucjan Dobroszycki and Jeffrey Gurock, eds., *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1991). Reprinted with permission of M. E. Sharpe.

Zbikowski from information from the archives of the Jewish Institute in Warsaw in order to produce a field of variation. Demographically, this region consisted of Poles, Ukrainians and Jews with smaller concentrations of Germans and Belorussians. Yet, of the thirty-one locations reporting anti-Jewish pogroms involving a fatality, twenty-two occurred in primarily Ukrainian regions, four more in mixed Ukrainian-German areas. Anti-Jewish pogroms are reported in only two Polish areas.

The Ukrainian violence in the very first days of the German occupation becomes more puzzling when it is compared to the first days of the Soviet occupation in late September 1939. Then, the Soviets stood by while Ukrainians assaulted Poles as the primary target, not Jews. Several thousand people died in locally based actions in the first two weeks of Soviet occupation – mostly Poles killed by their Ukrainian neighbors.<sup>43</sup> As Jan Gross points out, this violence created lasting effects due to its spontaneous and localized nature. Again, neighbors attacked one another. Because these brutal acts were not directed from without, blame could not be diverted to short-term interlopers:

It was the intimacy of violence which, I think, had the most lasting consequences. For it showed that *within* the affected communities a destructive force lay dormant which could be unleashed with devastating effect. To be sure the outside invader served as a catalyst, but, as the historical record shows without a doubt, local communities were primarily unhinged and subdued from within, as it were, by their own efforts.<sup>44</sup>

### Three Puzzles

**Ukrainian Violence in 1939 versus Ukrainian Violence in 1941** Why attack Poles at one instance of structural upheaval and assault Jews, but not Poles, two years later under another period of transition?

There is an obvious answer to this question. In the first case, the Soviets used class-based incitements to encourage Ukrainians to commit violence against Polish landowners and capitalists; in the second case, virulently antisemitic Germans encouraged Ukrainians to attack Jews. Following

<sup>43</sup> This description is taken from Jan T. Gross, "The Sovietization of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia" in Norman Davies and Antony Polonsky, eds., *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939–1946* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. 65.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

these lines, Ukrainian perpetrators could be seen as simply anticipating the targets of incoming occupiers and acting accordingly. No doubt there is some truth to this logic. However, it is not clear that the level of Soviet control during this violent transition was so high that the Soviets could have prevented actions against Jews if the Polish and Ukrainian populations were intent on committing them.<sup>45</sup> The key point is that there appears to have been a clear target of the violence when alternative targets were at least possible. In the 1941 case, perpetrators came from a wide strata of Ukrainian society. It is unclear that rural peasants, for instance, were acting strategically in order to receive benefits from the incoming German regime. Zbikowski writes, "Exceptionally tragic was the lot of the Jewish population living in small concentrations in purely Ukrainian villages. Several reports from the quoted collection certify that these groups of Jews were put to death by their Ukrainian neighbors without any assistance from the German occupiers."<sup>46</sup>

**Limited Polish Action in 1941** While Poles did commit violence against Jews, the table suggests that their action was far less frequent in comparative terms than that of Ukrainians.

**The Role of Belorussians** As a significant proportion of Poland B's population, Belorussians might be expected to be involved in the multiethnic fray in some fashion. Yet, Belorussians seem to be perpetrators and victims less than other groups. It is a possibility that scholars simply do less research on Belorussians than other groups and thus we do not know the violence in Belorussian history very well. However, as argued as follows, there are good reasons to believe that Belorussians were not as active as other groups.

In addition to these three puzzles, I will conclude the section with a short discussion of Jan T. Gross's work *Neighbors: The Destruction of the*

<sup>45</sup> Jan Gross argues that there was no special relationship between Soviets and Jews, suggesting that the Soviets would have been unlikely to go out of their way to provide special protections for Jews. See Jan T. Gross, "A Tangled Web: Confronting Stereotypes Concerning Relations between Poles, Germans, Jews, and Communists" in Istvan Deak, Jan T. Gross, and Tony Judt, eds., *The Politics of Retribution in Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 74–130.

<sup>46</sup> Zbikowski, "Local Anti-Jewish Pogroms in the Occupied Territories of Eastern Poland, June–July 1941" pp. 178–79.

*Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland.*<sup>47</sup> To repeat a point from the introduction, this work is most interested in periods most resembling anarchy. When a regime or occupier is in control, new constraints and opportunities come to the fore to cloud and complicate individual motivation, the primary focus of the study. Gross discusses two massacres in *Neighbors* – Radzilow and Jedwabne. The former occurred on July 6, 1941 apparently with the total absence of Germans. The latter took place on July 10, with Germans present. While Radzilow better fits the purpose here, Gross claims the perpetrators of Jedwabne also acted on their own volition. Both cases will be briefly considered. Gross's study essentially asks the same question as this study – how do members of one group come to want to attack members of another group.

As in the previous Lithuanian case, these puzzles concern variation occurring during Period Four. Again, a review of the evolution of power, status, and culture during Periods Two and Three is necessary before attempting to assess the ability of the four emotion-based explanations to answer these puzzles.

### *The Interwar Polish State*

Poland was born from the death of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires. It was a painful birth. In Eastern Galicia and Western Volhynia, Ukrainian nationalists challenged the emerging Polish state resulting in a war with 15,000 Ukrainian and 10,000 Polish casualties.<sup>48</sup> In the chaotic period following the First World War, the Ukrainian National Council governed a territory of four million people for eight months. As in Lithuania, Ukrainians, the regional majority, made deals with minorities in order to create an alliance powerful enough to withstand the hegemonic aspirations of a threatening nation, in this instance, the Poles. The National Council promised that 30% of seats in the future parliament would be reserved for minorities. With pledges like these, combined with Polish pogroms,<sup>49</sup> Jews were not entirely averse to siding with Ukrainians; in fact, an all-Jewish unit composed of 1,000 soldiers served as part of the

### In the Wake of Barbarossa

West Ukrainian Army.<sup>50</sup> Despite such forms of cooperation, Polish numbers overwhelmed the Ukrainian forces and established control, brutal control, over Eastern Galicia and Western Volhynia, the territories known after Soviet occupation as Poland B.

When the Soviets occupied Eastern Poland on September 17, 1939, they gained control over a territory that had held 51.6% of Poland's land and 37.1% of Poland's population at the end of the independent period.<sup>51</sup> This region was the backward and impoverished half of Poland, home to only 15% of Poland's industrial labor and consumer of less than 9% of Poland's electricity.<sup>52</sup> Demographically, Poles and Ukrainians made up equal thirds of the population while the remaining third was divided among Jews, Belorussians, and a mixed Orthodox peasantry.<sup>53</sup> In geographic terms, Ukrainians predominated in the south of the area, Poles and Belorussians in the north. As elsewhere in this region of Eastern Europe, the populations of the towns and cities greatly differed from the surrounding countryside. In 1931, over 80% of the population was rural and overwhelmingly Slavic. In contrast, Jews, 10.2% of the total population of Eastern Poland, made up 38% of the urban population, 79% of those involved in commerce, and probably over half the numbers of doctors and lawyers.<sup>54</sup> Despite skewed occupational figures, the

<sup>50</sup> Subtelny, *Ukraine* p. 369.

<sup>51</sup> Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, "Polish-Jewish Relations in Occupied Poland, 1939-1945" in Chimen Abramsky, Maciej Jachimczyk, and Antony Polonsky, eds., *The Jews in Poland* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 149.

<sup>52</sup> Norman Davies and Antony Polonsky, "Introduction" in Norman Davies and Antony Polonsky, eds., *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939-1946* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Jan Gross, "The Sovietization of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia" p. 64. Davies and Polonsky, "Introduction" p. 3, present precise figures from the wartime Polish government-in-exile: (in millions) Poles, 5.274; Ukrainians, 4.125; Belorussians, 1.123; Jews, 1.109; Russians, 0.134; Lithuanians, 0.084.

<sup>54</sup> The first two figures are from Maciej Sikierski, "The Jews in Soviet-Occupied Eastern Poland at the End of 1939: Numbers and Distribution" in Davies and Polonsky, eds., *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939-1946* p. 111-12. Urban centers are defined by a minimum twenty thousand population. In the largest cities, Sikierski provides the following figures: 31.9% Jewish in Lviv; 28.2% in Vilnius; and 43.0% in Bialystok.

Regarding figures on doctors and lawyers, Aharon Weiss states that at the end of the 1930s, 72% of all lawyers and 51% of all doctors in Eastern Galicia were Jewish. See Aharon Weiss, "Some Economic and Social Problems of the Jews of Eastern Galicia in the Period of Soviet Rule (1939-41)" in *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939-1946* p. 80. The numbers in Volhynia may have differed. Davies and Polonsky, "Introduction" p. 4 estimate "slightly more than half."

<sup>47</sup> Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>48</sup> Orest Subtelny provides a succinct summary of events in *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), pp. 367-72.

<sup>49</sup> A three-day pogrom occurred in Lviv after Poles retook that city.

dominant characteristic of Poland B was general poverty among all ethnic groups.

The Soviets also inherited provinces that had experienced the nation-izing policies of the Polish regime. The Polish interwar government, refusing to recognize Ukrainian and Belarussian cultures as capable of nationhood, embarked on a campaign of assimilation. The government banned the use of Ukrainian language in state agencies in 1924. While Ukrainian language schools became nominally bilingual, the Polish language predominated. The promised Ukrainian university never materialized.<sup>55</sup> Land policy also established Polish dominance in Eastern Poland. In the face of the land hungry, overpopulated, and overwhelming rural Ukrainian and Belarussian populations, the Polish regime settled Poles, many of them veterans, on the region's estates.<sup>56</sup> Attempting to build cohesion among the Poles in the East, the Polish government, with the use of genealogies, attempted to persuade the *szlachta zagrodowa* (peasant-nobles) of their historic rights to privilege in the region.<sup>57</sup>

Polish state policy also discriminated against Jews. The regime systematically excluded Jews, as well as Ukrainians and other groups, from government service. The state made efforts to eliminate the Jewish presence in business throughout the country.<sup>58</sup> Further, Poles discussed stripping Jews, at least those living in the East, of citizenship. Many Poles saw emigration as the best possible solution to the Jewish problem: "If Zionism meant Jewish emigration to (Palestine), no one was more Zionist than Poland's leaders in the late 1930's."<sup>59</sup>

In short, as in Lithuania, the ruling regime instituted a set of policies strengthening and reinforcing perception of an ethnic hierarchy and establishing the indisputable dominance of the titular ethnic group. By every

status indicator – language, educational policy, government and military service, land redistribution – Poles were on top.

Violence also exacerbated the awareness and volatility of ethnic dominance. In 1930, Ukrainians began a series of attacks on Polish estates in Galicia.<sup>60</sup> Rebels committed over 2,000 acts of sabotage. Polish police and cavalry units responded in ruthless fashion. Over 2,000 arrests and hundreds of lengthy prison terms resulted. Polish nationalists responded with political assassinations. In turn, the Polish regime extinguished self-government in many Ukrainian villages and set up a concentration camp in Bereza Kartuzka. This spiral of rebellion and repression cemented the boundaries between Ukrainians and Poles. In several ways, interwar eastern Poland resembled an occupied land.

### *The Events of September 1939*

Given the nature of the interwar Polish regime, it is hardly surprising that members of non-Polish groups in eastern Poland greeted the incoming Soviets with joy. Mistakenly, most believed that nothing could be worse than Polish rule. Apparently, members of almost every minority set about attacking the participants and symbols of Polish rule. As Jan Gross has written:

(T)he principal victims were Poles: the military colonists, the minor nobility of the borders, the landowners, the police, the forest guards, as well as small groups of soldiers and officers from units of the Polish army broken up by the German offensive. In the course of a few days in September, the Ukrainians, the White Russians, and the 'locals' had made those who had been instruments of Polonization of the provinces of the south-east of the past twenty years pay for it.<sup>61</sup>

The Soviets encouraged this action to take place as "rightful anger of the masses."<sup>62</sup> Much of this vengeful action may have been directed at agents of Polish control rather than against Poles as Poles, but, in this case, it is difficult to separate out these motivations with the available information.<sup>63</sup> Multiple factors were at play. For example, Soviet occupation encouraged

<sup>55</sup> Subtelny, *Ukraine* p. 429. Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 97–103, specifically discusses Poland's nationalizing policies in the eastern border-lands.

<sup>56</sup> The exact figures for Polish settlers are a matter of considerable dispute. Ukrainian sources put the figure at 200,000 rural and 100,000 urban Polish newcomers while Polish writers claim a number of less than 100,000 total. See Subtelny, *Ukraine* p. 429.

<sup>57</sup> Pawel Korzec and Jean-Charles Szurek, "Jews and Poles Under Soviet Occupation (1939–1941): Conflicting Interests" pp. 393–94.

<sup>58</sup> Brubaker discusses interwar policy toward Jews in a section entitled "Nationalizing the Urban Economy" pp. 93–97 in *Nationalism Reframed*. Also see Korzec and Szurek, "Jews and Poles Under Soviet Occupation" pp. 391–92.

<sup>59</sup> The quote is from Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed* p. 97.

<sup>60</sup> This paragraph relies on Subtelny, *Ukraine* p. 430.

<sup>61</sup> This quote is from Jan Gross and Irena Grudzinska-Gross, "W czterdziestym nas matko na Sybir zeslali" in *Polska a Rosja 1939–42* (London, 1983). The translated passage here is from Korzec and Szurek, "Jews and Poles Under Soviet Occupation" pp. 396–97.

<sup>62</sup> Korzec and Szurek, "Jews and Poles Under Soviet Occupation" p. 397.

<sup>63</sup> This problem is similar to the Latvian and Estonian attacks on German landowners discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>55</sup> Subtelny, *Ukraine* p. 429. Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 97–103, specifically discusses Poland's nationalizing policies in the eastern border-lands.

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<sup>59</sup> The quote is from Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed* p. 97.

general Ukrainian hopes for an independent state. The Soviet arrival, rather than the German alternative, also produced relief for the Jews who were familiar with the the German regime now stalled in the center of Poland.<sup>64</sup>

Yet, given this complexity, it is clear that after the breakdown of government constraints Poles were the primary target in September 1939.

### *The Nature of the Soviet Occupation*

Eager to win converts to the new Communist regime, the Soviets instituted many changes that effectively reversed the interwar positions of Poles and Ukrainians.<sup>65</sup> The highly popular expropriation of Polish landlords followed basic Communist principles. The Soviets went far beyond these economic measures, though. The University at Lviv, a symbol of regional Polish cultural dominance, switched its language of instruction from Polish to Ukrainian; further, in a blatant affront to Poles, the Soviets renamed Lviv University for Ivan Franko, a Ukrainian hero. Elementary schools made the switch as well and by 1940 6,000 of the region's 6,900 schools were operating in Ukrainian. In an important symbolic gesture, General Semen Tymoshenko, possessing a clearly Ukrainian name, led the Soviet forces into Galicia. No longer would only Poles control the means of force in the region. Poles could not display their national colors or national symbol, the white eagle. In time, the Soviets would deport 1.2 million from Poland B during the brief occupation from 1939-41. Most of these deportees were Poles. As Orest Subtelny has summarized, "The catastrophe reflected the dramatic plunge in the political fortunes of the once dominant Poles, who, deprived

<sup>64</sup> As in Lithuania, the nature of local knowledge of the ultimate nature of German intentions is not clear. On the one hand, 300,000 to 350,000 Jews fled Western Poland and the German invasion. On the other hand, significant numbers of these refugees decided later to return to the German-occupied zone. Ben-Cion Pinchuk has written, "In spite of a constant stream of updated information on Nazi atrocities, mass executions, wearing of yellow stars, ghettos and so on, that came with the refugees from German regions, nothing of it was disseminated. On the very eve of the German attack, Jews and non-Jews were left in the dark as to the real dangers of Nazism." "Sovietization and the Jewish Response to Nazi Policies of Mass Murder" in Davies and Polonsky, *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR* p. 132. Pinchuk also cites the long-held view of Germans as the more civilized of the two powers. The Soviet occupation of 1939-41, especially in 1940-41, did little to persuade inhabitants otherwise.

<sup>65</sup> This paragraph summarizes Subtelny, *Ukraine* pp. 454-57.

of government backing, suddenly found themselves transformed from oppressors into the oppressed."<sup>66</sup>

While the Poles descended the ethnic hierarchy, the Ukrainians ascended. The Ukrainian language could be heard in the schools and the university. The public witnessed Ukrainians, as members of newly founded militias, openly bearing arms. By 1940, the Soviets instituted a much harsher form of rule with the threat of deportation hanging over members of every ethnic group. Land reform, expected to put land into the hands of many smallholders, never came to pass. Most state business was transacted in Russian. Yet, in terms of relative positions, the Ukrainian hierarchical position in the region was clearly above that of the decimated and humbled Poles.

While the Polish-Ukrainian reversal was dramatic, the position of Jews also changed. As in Lithuania, the Communists had little alternative to reliance on Jews.<sup>67</sup> In the prewar period, Jews comprised over half of local party leaderships, a majority of the Central Committee, and roughly a quarter of the overall membership in the Communist Party.<sup>68</sup> Being 95% rural, not many Ukrainians or Belorussians in Poland B fit the desired social categories for Party leadership. Perhaps most crucially, Jews did not have the nationalist ambitions that made Ukrainians so suspect.

In the beginning stages of the occupation, there is little doubt that Jews occupied a number of positions in the Soviet administration that was disproportionate to their numbers in the general population. As Aharon Weiss sums up:

From the first days of Soviet rule, the Jews were absorbed into the state administration, together with all its offshoots, without any restriction, and they were represented in it to an extent exceeding their proportion of the population as a whole. . . . The Soviets saw in the Jews an element loyal to the new regime, and sometimes even sympathetic to it. . . . And so the Jews, perhaps more than the other two nations in Eastern Galicia, met the requirements of the authorities. The Jews at

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 456. Neal Ascherson writes, "Yet in its brutality and the sheer scale of its cold-blooded attempt to obliterate the Polish nation physically and culturally, this 21-month Soviet occupation far outdid all the crimes committed against Poland during this century and a quarter of Russian occupation under the Tsars," in *Struggles for Poland* (London: Pan Books, 1988), pp. 94-95.

<sup>67</sup> Davies and Polonsky, *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR* pp. 19-21.

<sup>68</sup> Michael C. Steinlauf, "Poland" in David S. Wyman, ed., *The World Reacts to the Holocaust* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 81-155.

this time had no political ambitions such as would have excited the suspicions of the Soviets or given them cause to exercise reserve.<sup>69</sup>

The actual numbers and proportions were not as important as the fact that Jews could be found in positions that they had never held. The effect of meeting a Jew in a position of authority or a Jew holding a gun, possessing means of force, was stunning for both Jews and non-Jews. In some memoirs, Jews recall feeling “ten feet tall” after meeting Jews in the Red Army.<sup>70</sup> As one Jew remarked, “(F)or the first time, the Jew was not a second-class citizen.”<sup>71</sup> Michael C. Steinlauf sums up: “Some of the working class youth, suddenly offered unprecedented educational and vocational opportunities, enthusiastically embraced a system in which being born Jewish was declared irrelevant; some, indeed, even joined the Soviet security apparatus.”<sup>72</sup> Things would change during the course of the Soviet occupation, but, as Gross states, “At the beginning what mattered above all was the newly introduced equality, and with it a restored sense of dignity.”<sup>73</sup>

The Soviet occupation allowed Jews to turn around a common inter-war Polish phrase and taunt Poles by saying “You wanted Poland without Jews, now you have Jews without Poland.”<sup>74</sup> The response of non-Jews was similar to that seen in the Lithuanian case. The gentile population saw and categorized Jews as collaborators, traitors; they recall Jews welcoming the Soviets and becoming their willing servants.<sup>75</sup> Most scholars agree that participants justified violent pogroms against Jews in the first days of the German occupation with this charge of collaboration.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Weiss, “Some Economic and Social Problems of the Jews” p. 97. Weiss also discusses the new opportunities for state positions for Jewish doctors, lawyers, and engineers. For all of these occupational categories, Jews had been previously barred from state employment but were able to obtain positions under Soviet rule.

<sup>70</sup> Davies and Polonsky, *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR* pp. 17–18, citing historical work conducted by Dov Levin.

<sup>71</sup> Korzec and Szurek, “Jews and Poles Under Soviet Occupation” p. 398.

<sup>72</sup> Steinlauf, “Poland” p. 104.

<sup>73</sup> Jan T. Gross, “The Jewish Community in the Soviet-Annexed Territories on the Eve of the Holocaust: A Social Scientist’s View” in Lucjan Dobroszycki and Jeffrey Gurock, eds., *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 159.

<sup>74</sup> Gross, “The Jewish Community in the Soviet-Annexed Territories on the Eve of the Holocaust” p. 159.

<sup>75</sup> As in the Lithuanian case, stories about Jews physically kissing and embracing Soviet tanks seem to be common.

<sup>76</sup> Zbikowski, Korzec and Szurek, Subtelny, Davies and other authors cited in the footnotes of this section all concur that the charge of collaboration was pervasive throughout Poland B.

## In the Wake of Barbarossa

The nature of the response in Poland B is exemplified in the Karski report. Jan Karski was a Polish courier who made reports to the Polish government in exile on the nature of the Soviet and German occupations. His February 1940 report related the position of Jews under Soviet occupation.<sup>77</sup> Although Karski describes Polish thinking and emotion, there is little reason to doubt that many Ukrainians held the same views. Karski stated, among other observations:

They (Jews) are entering the political cells; in many of them they have taken over the most critical political-administrative positions. They play quite a large role in the factory unions, in higher education, and most of all in commerce; but, above and beyond all of this, they are involved in loansharking and profiteering, in illegal trade, contraband, foreign currency exchange, liquor, immoral interests, pimping, and procurement. In these territories, in the vast majority of cases, their situation is better both economically and politically than before the war.

Karski further stated:

The attitude of Jews towards the Bolsheviks is regarded among the Polish population as quite positive. It is generally believed that the Jews betrayed Poland and the Poles, that they are basically communists, that they crossed over to the Bolsheviks with banners waving.

Karski went on to qualify these statements by noting that Jews had been previously oppressed. Nevertheless, he notes how Jewish police officers commonly treated the Polish population with disdain and disrespect. This comment brings up a point also made by Jan Gross – the number of Jews who occupied these positions is not critical. Rather, it was the fact that a Jew *could* obtain such a position of authority that was so disturbing. Jan Gross writes of the Polish experience of seeing Jews in these positions:

What about the shared memory of Jews lending a helping hand to the Soviet invader? Well, there were Jews in the Soviet administrative apparatus, in the local militia, and in the secret police. And there is no reason to think that they would have been less rude or abusive than any other such Soviet functionary. But that they were remembered so vividly and with such scorn does not tell us necessarily that Jews were massively involved in collaboration. Rather, I think, it is a reflection of how unseemly, how jarring, how offensive it was to see a Jew in a position of authority.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Karski’s February 1940 report is summarized by Korzec and Szurek, “Jews and Poles Under Soviet Occupation” pp. 386–90 and in Davies and Polonsky, *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR* pp. 13–14.

<sup>78</sup> Jan T. Gross, “The Jewish Community in the Soviet-Annexed Territories on the Eve of the Holocaust” p. 161.

As in Lithuania, the Soviet authorities realized the effect that Jewish participation had upon the general population and they took action to reduce Jewish numbers. No Jew was elected to the Supreme Soviet in the elections of March 1940; Jews were underrepresented in the national assemblies of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia; Jews were removed from senior, and highly visible, positions.<sup>79</sup> But the damage was done. The popular perceptions of Jewish status and collaboration continued (and continue to the present day).

In the days preceding Barbarossa, Polish power in the region had been broken through Soviet brutality and deportations. The settlers and soldiers that had maintained Polish rule were gone. In terms of political status, the Polish position had also been reduced. As Subtelny stated, the oppressors had become the oppressed. By all indicators of ethnic status a new hierarchy had been created with Ukrainians and Jews in positions below Soviet functionaries but above Poles.

#### *Returning to the Three Puzzles*

Resentment produces a coherent answer to the three puzzles of Poland B. Interwar Polish administration had created a clear ethnic status hierarchy with Poles at the peak and all other ethnic groups below. The Soviet takeover of September 1939 allowed Ukrainians to use violence to reduce the position of Poles. After the humiliations of the first few weeks of Soviet rule, Poles knew that they were no longer masters in this region. Soviet language, education, and land policies cemented the inferior position of Poles. As Jan Malanowski sums up, "All paths of promotion were soon closed to Poles who inevitably began to think of themselves as second-rate citizens."<sup>80</sup> Although possessing an antisemitic tradition, Ukrainians were apparently not compelled to commit violence against Jews, another group as far or farther beneath the Poles as the Ukrainians.

When the Germans entered in June of 1941, the Poles were no longer the focus of Ukrainian violence. During the brief period of Soviet rule, Poles and Ukrainians perceived that Jews had risen to a status position

equal or higher than that of Ukrainians. When constraints were released by the German invasion, Ukrainians were not impelled to attack Poles, the target just two years earlier. Soviet policies, and especially Soviet deportations, had reduced the position of Poles to a hopelessly inferior level. This time, Jews were the status rival. Humiliations and violence "put them back in their place."

The second puzzle asks why Poles participated to a lesser extent than Ukrainians in attacking Jews in the wake of Barbarossa. After all, Poles were well known for anti-Jewish pogroms in the region in earlier periods of semianarchy. They would commit violence against Jews in the postwar period as well. Here, without a doubt, was another opportunity. Rage would predict violence. Here, a badly downtrodden group is presented with opportunity to lash out. Furthermore, a traditional scapegoat, the Jewish population, is available as a vulnerable target. Resentment, on the other hand, predicts inaction for ethnic groups if violence would clearly not produce a change in status position. Unlike the Ukrainians, the Polish position had become so weak that violence would not have obtained any significant result in changing status position.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, the Poles, again unlike the Ukrainians, held little hope that the Germans would propel them into a position of regional dominance.

The third puzzle concerns the irrelevance of Belorussians. Although as numerous as Jews, their rural and poorly educated situation kept them from making advances during the Soviet occupation.<sup>82</sup> They were in a lower position during the interwar Polish administration and they remained in that lower position under the Soviets. They experienced no status reversal that would have created the emotion of Resentment nor did they create this emotion in any other group by rising above them on the status hierarchy. Notice, though, that they did not take out their frustrations, which were numerous under Soviet rule, with antimority violence.

Fear and Hatred poorly explain the overall pattern of ethnic violence witnessed in Poland B. The targets are not rivals in terms of force or threat. As noted above, Hatred does an inadequate job in explaining frequent changes in targets or regional variation within a particular ethnonational culture.

<sup>79</sup> Davies and Polonsky, *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR* p. 21-22. They are citing Weiss on the subject of senior positions in Eastern Galicia.

<sup>80</sup> Jan Malanowski, "Sociological Aspects of the Annexation of Poland's Eastern Provinces to the USSR in 1939-41" in Keith Sword, ed., *The Soviet Takeover of the Polish Eastern Provinces, 1939-41* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), p. 77.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, especially pp. 80-84. Malanowski comments on the poor psychological state of Poles at the end of the Soviet occupation.

<sup>82</sup> Due to this position, it is not clear that Belorussian perception of status hierarchy was as powerful as that of Poles, Ukrainians, or Jews.

As in the Lithuanian case, Rage is the most powerful challenger to Resentment. The same story concerning the conjunction of societal frustration, traditional antisemitism combined with cognitive distortions, and release of constraints can be told for both the Baltic and Poland B. Again, Rage fails to explain the overall targeting pattern as well as Resentment. Not all frustrated groups lashed out in anger and violence. Ukrainians varied their targets in line with changing status hierarchies. Again, a Rage-based explanation would require the addition of other specific local factors to fit the observed differences in target and timing. Of course, elements of Rage and Hatred present themselves within the Resentment narrative. Also, Rage and Hatred may be the dominant path in certain locations, a point that is addressed in the following section.

### *Neighbors*

Jan T. Gross's book, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, provides details for the Polish cases listed in Zbikowski's table (Table 6.1).<sup>83</sup> Zbikowski lists only three reports of anti-Jewish pogroms in predominately Polish localities. The Radzilow region is credited with two reports. As Zbikowski mentions Jedwabne in the text of his article, these two reports would seem to be Radzilow and Jedwabne, the two neighboring villages that Gross discusses in detail. Gross briefly mentions the other listed case, Wizna.<sup>84</sup>

The Radzilow case is perhaps of most interest here. The primary goal of the present project is to isolate emotional mechanisms operating among peoples with a long history of living together. The possibility of isolating these mechanisms is best in the absence of the effects of firm control of occupying regimes. Thus, the first focus should be on the first few days of near anarchy before German establishment of rule, basically June 22 and a few following days. In both Radzilow and Jedwabne, events resembled those described above in the Lithuanian case. Violence occurred in these days but with a focus on humiliation, and perhaps plunder of Jews, not extermination. As Gross sums up, "Some people were killed, but the principal threats Jews faced at the time were beatings, confiscation of material property, and humiliations – men caught in the street could be

### *In the Wake of Barbarossa*

ordered to clean outhouses with their bare hands, for example."<sup>85</sup> Gross's work and this book are in basic agreement with a central issue: When given an opportunity, significant segments of one group are able to target another group even without much direction or any significant prior organization.

Even with more consolidated German control, Gross stresses the volition of Poles in participating in the Germans' extermination project. Radzilow is the best example here. Based on the testimony of survivors, "not even a single German was present" during the massacre in Radzilow.<sup>86</sup> In Jedwabne on July 10, as Gross notes, "No sustained organized activity could take place there without their (German) consent."<sup>87</sup> Still, Gross makes a convincing case that Poles were given reign to act on their own, and they chose to use the opportunity to mass murder the Jewish population of the town.

The quality of the mass murders is perhaps most interesting for the comparative approach employed here. Although motives of plunder and political ingratiation with the new occupiers are no doubt at work, the specific nature of the humiliations show something more at work. In Jedwabne, Poles made Jews carry a statue of Lenin around the town while singing. A rabbi was forced to lead the procession to the barn where the mass burning would take place. Testimony also holds that a rabbi and a kosher butcher were given a red banner before being chased into the barn. As one survivor of the Radzilow events sums up, "The Jewish population became a toy in the hands of the Poles."<sup>88</sup> As in Lithuania, the quality of the violence indicates that local Poles firmly connected Jews to the Soviet occupying regime. As in Lithuania, Poles felt compelled to humiliate Jews, to turn them into toys, in ways that specifically linked them to the outgoing Soviet regime.

### *Neighbors in Comparison*

Gross's interpretations are not much help in explaining the three puzzles that guide this section. Gross's work is not comparative. He does not compare Jedwabne and Radzilow to any cases in which violence was absent. He does not compare Polish regions to Lithuanian or Ukrainian regions. If one looks only at the single case of Jedwabne, one might form

<sup>83</sup> Gross cites Zbikowski's article containing this table as "a concise article with summary data" in "A Tangled Web" footnote 71, p. 125.

<sup>84</sup> Gross, *Neighbors* pp. 70–71.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54. <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65 and p. 69. <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77. <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

the inference that Poles were exceptionally cruel to Jews. When seen in light of the violence that occurred at the same time in surrounding Lithuanian, Latvian, and Ukrainian regions, the puzzle becomes the one formulated above. That is, what accounts for the comparative *infrequency* of Polish violence in the regions of Poland B?

Comparative political science seeks to identify general processes and mechanisms that are able to help explain variation in social phenomena. Fear, Hatred, Resentment, and Rage are narratives of processes centered around different motivations. They are decidedly simplified versions of reality designed to compare competing theories linking individual motivation to ethnic violence. *Neighbors* is a historical work that does not seek simplification or comparison of alternative ideas of motivation. In fact, Gross provides little insight into the motives of the killers. He makes two unsurprising points on this issue. First, he states that the Jedwabne murders should be seen as a series of episodes in which various motivations came together to create the outcome. He writes, “. . . we must also be able to see it as a mosaic composed of discrete episodes, improvised by local decision-makers, and hinging on unforced behavior, rooted in God-knows-what motivations, of all those who were near the murder scene at the time.”<sup>89</sup> It is undoubtedly true that various individuals with a myriad of motivations participate in these events. Given a comparative lens, however, it would seem that some more general force is behind the patterns seen within the field of variation, some variable or turn in the process that explains differences among regions. It is the goal of comparative political scientists to seek this force and see if it has generalizable properties.

Gross identifies a general force behind the murders – antisemitism. At different junctures in his works, he mentions antisemitism’s deep roots in the region; he specifically mentions medieval prejudices about ritual murder, for instance. Again, there is an obvious problem for the comparativist. Undoubtedly, antisemitism is a primary factor, and probably a necessary one, in explaining the ferocity and prevalence of the violence against Jews in June 1941. However, antisemitism, especially when linked to medieval origins, is a constant. Constants cannot explain variation. Poles did not like Jews, Ukrainians did not like Jews, Russians did not like Jews, Lithuanians did not like Jews, Latvians did not like Jews, Germans did not

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

like Jews. Yet the type, timing, and prevalence of violence varied among and within these nations.

What does Gross’s case study indicate about Fear, Hatred, Resentment, and Rage? It would seem that Gross tells a tale of Hatred. An antisemitic schema arises during a series of structural changes and collapses. Resulting from this schema, the emotion of hatred heightens a desire for historically framed revenge. In the grip of this emotion, individuals essentialize the opposing group. Dehumanizing violence results. This narrative is certainly plausible. However, an examination of the details in Gross’s history suggests that Resentment may be at work in this particular Polish region. Resentment’s foundation is group comparison and the narrative directs the analyst to try to understand the nature of the group comparisons made by the perpetrators at the time of ethnic violence. With this point in mind, it is fruitful to reconsider some of the events that occurred in these Polish localities.

First, consider Gross’s treatment of the Soviet destruction of the local Polish underground in June 1940.<sup>90</sup> After a Soviet attack on the Polish underground headquarters, the Soviet regime imprisoned 250 people from the area of Jedwabne, Radzilow, and Wizna – the towns where the mass murders of Jews occurred one year later. Gross rightly states, “Naturally, a historian investigating the trail of violence in the area would like to know whether any connection can be established between these two extraordinary events: the destruction of the Polish underground organization in June 1940 by the Soviets and the mass murder of Jews in July 1941 by the Poles.”<sup>91</sup> Gross cites documents that show that Jews were not among the informers who betrayed the Polish underground to the Soviets. Therefore, Jews cannot be logical targets of revenge a year later. He concludes the section by stating, “In any case, the Jews from Jedwabne were not implicated in this whole affair.”<sup>92</sup> However, if one views the perpetrators as driven by group comparisons, as Resentment holds, it would seem impossible to so easily disconnect this event from the one that happens only a year later. Local Poles suffered imprisonment and death under Soviet occupation. Even if Jews were not the direct cause of this suffering, they did not suffer in the same way as Poles.<sup>93</sup> In the region, Jews were

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 47–53. <sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 48. <sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>93</sup> Gross argues that Jews probably suffered more than Poles during the Soviet occupation, but it is highly doubtful that Poles saw it that way at the time. See Gross, *The Tangled Web* p. 103.

not organizing a local underground, NKVD troops were not “ferociously attacking” Jewish positions, the Soviets apparently did not arrest and interrogate Jews for participation in anti-Soviet activities. Resentment holds that Poles in this area would have compared their lot to that of other groups. Through comparison, they would likely come to a belief that Poles are anti-Soviet resisters and Jews are not. Gross points out that Jews were not active collaborators and thus makes the case that the killing of Jews could not be revenge. Resentment is not revenge, however. Revenge drives action against active treachery, but Resentment predicts action against an ethnic group even in the absence of specific betrayal. The most relevant factor is perception of change of group position. Consider again the specific nature of the violence. On July 10, 1941, the Poles of Jedwabne made the rabbi carry a red flag before they killed him. These perpetrators knew that the rabbi was not a Soviet collaborator; they were not seeking revenge for a specific betrayal. Resentment suggests that the Polish population wanted a symbol of the population that had risen above them, a symbol that they could turn into a “toy,” thus showing that the positions between the two groups had once again turned.

Of course, these local events occurred within the broader contours of the Communist takeover in Poland B. Building on a point made earlier in the Lithuanian case, an emotion-based approach generates a viewpoint concerning how Poles were likely to perceive Jewish participation in the new Soviet regime. As Gross recognizes, Jews took positions in the Soviet administration. He even suggests that young Jews took these positions in order to escape the suffocating atmosphere of Jewish social life of that time.<sup>94</sup> Gross makes the case that this collaboration was not extensive, it was normal given the circumstances, that “it is impossible to identify some innate, unique characteristics of Jewish collaboration with the Soviets during the period 1939–1941.”<sup>95</sup> From the point of view of the emotion-driven Polish population, what does it matter if Jewish collaboration was nonextensive and normal rather than “innate and unique”? In the comparative thinking of the Poles, Jews were a subordinate group in interwar Poland but under Soviet occupation indicators showed that they gained a measure of equality. That fact alone, without regard to why it happened, created an emotional reaction in the Polish population. Under the sway of this emotion, Poles were more likely to think in terms of group status and talk about “the Jews” as an enemy group. While antisemitism

<sup>94</sup> Gross, *A Tangled Web* pp. 102–03. <sup>95</sup> Gross, *Neighbors* p. 155.

helps explain the ease and intensity of group essentialization, the phenomenon itself is a general one.

Finally, it is important to keep in mind the obsessiveness of group consciousness that pervaded northeastern Europe at this time. From the ruins of the First World War, the Baltic states and Poland emerged. An independent Ukrainian entity also briefly existed. This was an era of emerging national consciousness, a consciousness only heightened by the loss of statehood in the early stages of World War II. It was also an era when remnants of an older social system lingered. Although engaged in increasing interactions, ethnic groups mostly kept to themselves. For instance, after giving a largely positive review of Jewish-Latvian relations, Andrew Ezergailis writes, “But there is no reason to portray the relationship too idyllically; there was little contact between the two peoples. They lived like oil and water, separated by tradition, religion, and language.”<sup>96</sup> The same could be said for the rest of the region, including Poland B. The birth of national consciousness and the nation-state in a time when groups still lived as oil and water could not bode well for minorities. Acute awareness of group and group status heightened the comparative processes underlying Resentment. Resentment suggests how local factors, in conjunction with national events and the east European milieu, created group comparisons that motivated the violence seen in *Neighbors*. In addition to providing an explanation for the variation witnessed in the broader region, Resentment offers an alternative view for the action in these Polish localities.

### Summary

By the end of the 1930s, the perception of ethnic hierarchy pervaded daily life in the Baltic countries and Poland B. In the Baltic countries, and especially in Poland, the state worked to cement the perception of the titular group’s dominant position. The Soviets and Germans reversed status orderings and destroyed stable hierarchies. As the quoted passages above illustrate, powerful emotions followed, strong desires developed, violent actions resulted. When constraints were lifted, perpetrators selected targets with a logic often fitting Resentment.

<sup>96</sup> Andrew Ezergailis, “Latvia” in David S. Wyman, ed., *The World Reacts to the Holocaust* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 360.