

Intimate Violence: Anti-Jewish Pogroms in the Shadow of the Holocaust

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Two tragedies befell the Jews of Eastern Europe after the outbreak of World War II. The first and by far the best known and exhaustively researched is the Shoah, the Nazi extermination effort. The second, as Żbikowski (1993: 174) eloquently puts it, is “the violent explosion of the latent hatred and hostility of local communities.” This book focuses on the second tragedy, a wave of popular anti-Jewish violence that erupted in summer 1941, in the aftermath of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. With the Soviet army retreating, the German army advancing, and government authority collapsing, civilian populations across hundreds of villages and towns stretching from the Baltic states in the north to Romania in the south committed atrocities against their Jewish neighbors. These often gruesome and sadistic crimes ranged from looting and beatings to public humiliation, rape, torture, and murder. One of the most widely known yet hardly unique such incidents occurred in the town of Jedwabne, Poland on July 10, 1941. In a day-long rampage under the approving eyes of the Germans, Poles committed mass murder. The Jews were ordered to gather in the town square, where among other humiliations they were forced to clean the pavement, smash the monument to Lenin, and hold a mock “religious” funeral on his behalf. Those who attempted to flee were hunted down and clubbed, stoned, knifed, and drowned, their bloodied corpses often left in pits. Apparently dissatisfied with such inefficient methods of murder, the perpetrators herded hundreds of remaining Jews—women, children, the old, and the sick—into a barn that was doused with kerosene and set alight (Gross 2001). Ethnic violence is never easy to comprehend, but it is especially puzzling when the perpetrators are civilians and the victims are their neighbors (Fujii 2009; Straus 2006). This book investigates the reasons for such intimate violence.

The 1941 pogroms are a particularly interesting instance of ethnic violence for two reasons. First, they happened under conditions of state collapse. Many who study ethnic violence emphasize the key role of state elites in orchestrating conflict

(e.g., Brass 2003; Gagnon 2004; Lambrozo 1992; Wilkinson 2004). But state actions cannot explain the 1941 pogroms because there was no state when they occurred. The Germans invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 but did not establish full political authority on Polish territory until September (Żbikowski 2007: 315; Snyder 2008: 96). In the period between German and Soviet rule there was no central government in Poland. To the extent anyone was in control it would have been the Germans, but as we argue further below they did not function as a *de facto* state elite. Although the Germans did try to incite pogroms, they met with only limited success. Pogroms occurred both with and without the Germans being present. Like Kalyvas (2006) and Petersen (2002), we seek to understand ethnic violence in stateless situations such as can occur during periods of war, civil war, regime change, and the collapse of empire.

Second, the scale of the attacks demonstrate that ethnic violence is not an inherent feature of inter-group life in stateless or near stateless societies even with relationships as long-standing and conflictual as those between Jews and non-Jews. Given the long history of restrictions, attacks, and expulsions directed against Jews in Poland, it is easy to believe that non-Jews must have eagerly assaulted their Jewish neighbors when the Nazi onslaught on the Soviet Union presented an opportunity. After all, the Germans were if anything sympathetic to those who wanted to attack Jews, and in the absence of a state the “clouding features of legal restraint” (Petersen 2002: 12) disappeared and people were freer to act on their desires. As Kalyvas (2006: 389) notes in regard to civil wars, chaotic and uncertain circumstances offer “irresistible opportunities to harm everyday enemies.”

Yet pogroms were relatively rare events. According to our data, in the six regions comprising most of the then eastern Polish borderlands—Białystok, Lwów, Poleskie, Stanisławów, Tarnopol, and Wołyń—pogroms occurred in 204 municipalities, comprising just 9 percent of all localities in the region where Jews and non-

Jews dwelled together. Most communities never experienced a pogrom and most ordinary non-Jews never attacked Jews. Such a pattern is not limited to Poland. Tolnay and Beck (1995: 45), for example, report that more than one-third of counties in the U.S. South never experienced a lynching. Varshney (2002: 6-7) notes that only eight cities in India accounted for just over 45 percent of all deaths in Hindu-Muslim violence. Our data show that ethnic violence is situational rather than inherent. The task for researchers, one we undertake in this book, is to identify in societies with long histories of animosity the local contexts in which ethnic violence either breaks out or fails to do so.

Why did pogroms occur in some localities but not others? This is our central question. Our results demonstrate that many of the most commonly believed explanations for pogroms do not hold up to empirical scrutiny. The 1941 pogroms were not orchestrated by the state, and did not occur where economic competition between Jews and non-Jews was fiercest, where anti-Semitism was most virulent, or where Jews were the most sympathetic to communism. None of these accounts explain the relative rarity of the violence. We contend that the pogroms were ultimately about politics. They represented a strategy whereby non-Jews, in Poland principally Poles and Ukrainians, attempted to rid themselves of what they thought would be future political rivals. Pogroms were most likely to occur where there were lots of Jews, where those Jews advocated national equality with non-Jews, and where parties advocating minority rights challenged the ethnic power structure. In the following section we briefly review existing explanations for municipality-level variation in ethnic violence, and then expand our own explanation that focuses on political threat. Details of each theory and how they are operationalized for testing will be given in chapter 3.

Inadequate Explanations

Anti-Semitism

The anti-Semitism hypothesis (e.g., Gross 2001) predicts pogroms in those localities where hatred of Jews was the strongest. Jews who came of age after the war often heard from survivors that the Poles and Ukrainians were even worse to the Jews than the Germans. The anti-Semitism argument is popular among those who see the 1941 pogroms as simply the latest manifestation of a long history of anti-Jewish discrimination and violence. In the simple version there are actually two claims. One is implicit, that most if not all Poles and Ukrainians were anti-Semitic. A second is that anti-Semitism led to pogroms. If this simple version were true we would observe many more pogroms than we actually do. Yet pogroms were relatively rare, which means that one or both of the claims is wrong. Either most Poles and Ukrainians were not sufficiently anti-Semitic to engage in pogroms or anti-Semitism did not lead to pogroms, or both. We operationalize local-level anti-Semitism using the proportion of non-Jews who voted for anti-Semitic parties during the interwar period. We demonstrate that where anti-Semitism did exist there was no relationship between it and the occurrence of a pogrom.

Jewish Collaboration with the Soviet Occupation

The argument about Jewish collaboration with the 1939-1941 Soviet occupation (e.g., Musiał 2004) predicts pogroms where local Jewish support for the Soviet regime was highest. Many Polish and Ukrainian nationalists see the Jews as disloyal for welcoming the Soviet occupation and taking prominent roles in the administration. In this view pogroms are less about targeting Jews per se than about revenge for supporting the Soviet enemy. For Petersen (2002) the Jewish role in the

Soviet occupation is equally crucial, but the motivation for pogroms is different. He argues that rather than being revenge for Jewish communism, pogroms result from resentment that non-Jews felt at their demotion in status vis-à-vis the Jews under the Soviet regime. Whether revenge or resentment, however, the empirical implications are the same: the higher the Jewish support for the Soviet regime, the more likely a pogrom occurred. There is ample evidence of non-Jewish anti-communist sentiment during pogroms. Indeed, one common pogrom ritual was to have the local Jews dismantle the nearest statue of Lenin and sing Soviet songs. We have no data by locality on Jewish presence in the Soviet administration, but it stands to reason that sympathy for the Soviet regime would be highest where support for communist parties was strongest. Therefore if pogroms were about punishment for collaboration with the Soviet occupation then the probability of a pogrom should be positive related to pre-war communist support. We find no such systematic relationship between pogrom outbreaks and the vote given to communist parties during the interwar period.

Economic Competition

Another family of explanations relates to economic rivalry and hardship. The study of the economic roots of ethnic violence has a long pedigree in comparative politics (Bonacich 1972; Horowitz 1985; Forbes 1997). Three kinds of arguments get made. One focuses on the deleterious effects of economic downturns, which lead to the scapegoating of vulnerable minorities. Jews would be particularly targeted in times of crisis because non-Jews associate them with markets and capitalism (Rogger 1992; Rohrbacher 1993). We don't doubt the applicability of this hypothesis under more settled political conditions, but even the most creative conspiracy-mongers were not blaming the Jews for the Nazi invasion and concomitant economic collapse. The economic scapegoating hypothesis lacks *prima facie*

validity.

A second and related economic explanation focuses on competition in ethnically-segmented labor markets and economic production. In this view Jews constitute a quintessential “middleman minority” (Blalock 1967). As summarized by Olzak (1992: 40), such minorities are distinguished by dwelling in enclaves, their sojourner status, and “concentration in finance, commerce, and other jobs that mediate between producers and consumers . . .” Of these characteristics only sojourner status does not clearly characterize the Jews. At just under 10 percent of the population, according to figures from the late 1920s and early 1930s Jews comprised over 70 percent of university graduates (Marcus 1983: 67), over 70 percent of those employed in commerce, and controlled 39 of 137 joint-stock companies in commerce (Tomaszewski 1989: 147). Particularly sensitive were the small market towns, the so-called *shtetlach*, where Jews were demographically weighty and tended to be notably wealthier and more influential than their peasant neighbors. Jews were not sojourners in Poland in the literal sense, having dwelled in Poland for hundreds of years. Nonetheless many non-Jews, particularly on the right of the political spectrum, considered them a foreign element. In the middleman minority view Jews are most vulnerable to pogroms where they are most segregated from non-Jewish populations and where they have excessive influence over important economic sectors, such as commerce. Adapting Olzak (1992: 40), in these areas Jewish success is likely to be seen as a threat both to non-Jewish elites who seek to maintain power and to those in lower-status positions who resent their economic reliance on Jews.

Ethnic economic competition ought to be a compelling explanation. Polish nationalist parties openly advocated “Polonization” of the economy during the interwar period, leading at one point in the later 1930’s to an economic boycott of Jewish businesses and even scattered pogroms. But no indicator of such competition can reliably predict where pogroms occurred and did not occur in 1941. We illustrate

this with a number of variables, including interwar census data on the fraction of workers employed in commerce, and a dummy variable identifying small-market towns, where economic competition between Jews and non-Jews would likely have been most bitter. Pogroms were not more likely to happen in areas where commerce predominated or in the small market towns.

A third economic explanation argues that the 1941 pogroms occurred where non-Jews sought to rob Jews of their wealth. Looting during the pogroms is well-documented. In the case of the Jedwabne pogrom, for example, we know that peasants from surrounding villages brought carts to carry away Jewish property. In other cases Jews were able to buy their way out of trouble, at least temporarily. If robbery or extortion were the driving force, we would expect pogroms to occur where there was the most Jewish wealth. It is very difficult to operationalize this hypothesis at the local level, but we are fortunate to have data from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee on the location of free loan associations. These associations were established to assist Jews in economic distress by offering no-interest loans for economic development. According to the wealth hypothesis pogroms should take place in localities where Jews were too prosperous to warrant a free loan association. We find no such evidence.

Political Threat and Ethnic Violence

Our explanation focuses squarely on politics, and is broadly consistent with the “power-threat” model initially developed to understand the dynamics of U.S. race relations (Blalock 1967). The power-threat theory argues that where minority groups threaten the dominance of the majority, the majority will take actions to suppress minority power. In the U.S. postbellum South, for example, this view holds that whites saw two sources of threat to their continued racial dominance. One was

the sheer number of liberated blacks, which led to white fear of being outnumbered. Another was the influence of political parties such as the Republicans and later the Progressives, who were more sympathetic than the Democrats to black civil rights. The theory maintains that where the black threat was most acute—where blacks constituted a substantial minority and racially inclusive parties were popular—whites intent on preserving the racial status quo were most likely to implement measures of social control such as electoral disenfranchisement, Jim Crow legislation, and lynching (Tolnay and Beck 1995: 57).

We argue that the difference between violent and non-violent localities in Poland lies in a similar combination of the popularity of parties supporting minority rights and polarization between Jews and non-Jews. There are three important explanatory factors, each of which can be measured at the local level and independently influences the probability of a pogrom: the popularity of Polish and Ukrainian parties advocating ethnic tolerance, the demographic weight of Jews, and the degree to which Jews advocated national equality with Poles and Ukrainians. Let us first address the effect of ethnically tolerant parties. One of the most important divisions within mass opinion in interwar Poland pitted nationalists who advocated imposing a homogeneous culture throughout the territory against others who preferred more inclusive nationality policies. Although this conflict is sometimes reduced to one between majority and minority groups, in actuality both majorities and to a lesser extent minorities were internally divided on these issues.

For Poles this conflict played itself out in the political struggle between two blocs of parties: the National Democrats and their allies, who sought a “Polish” Poland with minimal minority rights, and the party of the dictator Marshal Piłsudski, the BBWR, which favored an accommodation with the minorities in exchange for allegiance to a multinational state led by Poles. Ukrainians were a minority in Poland but constituted a majority in the southeastern region of Galicia. They were

basically united in their desire for autonomy (from Poles) but like Poles were divided on the extent to which Jews could be included in their national project. According to power-threat theory pogroms would be more likely to occur where the popularity of tolerant parties indicated a population supportive of pluralistic nationality policies. In these areas the nationalists would have felt the most threatened and attacked Jews in the hopes of forestalling the need to acknowledge Jewish national rights. Of course this is only true up to a point: there would be no perpetrators in localities where all the non-Jews respected Jewish rights. Sadly such a situation appears to be exceedingly rare. We show that in accordance with power-threat theory the probability of a pogrom increases with support for the ethnically pluralist BBWR party.

The second factor correlated with the likelihood of a pogrom is the size of the Jewish population relative to that of non-Jews. Where Jews were few in number they posed little danger to Polish and Ukrainian authority, and there were correspondingly few pogroms in those localities. But the likelihood of a pogrom went up in tandem with the proportion of Jews. Part of this was probably about increased Jewish visibility, which made Jews easier targets. But a more important aspect was the potential threat substantial Jewish numbers posed to non-Jewish dominance. Polish and Ukrainian nationalism had never been sympathetic to Jewish difference, and attitudes hardened after the Nazi seizure of power and death of the dictator Marshal Piłsudski. This put the Jews in a difficult situation. Allying with the Polish or Ukrainian nationalists might have allayed nationalist fear, but at the unacceptably high cost of forsaking Jewish culture. Any other option left the Jews open to suspicion of disloyalty to the national cause. For nationalists, then, Jews were inherently suspect. We illustrate the positive correlation between the Jewish population proportion and the occurrence of a pogrom using interwar census data on ethnic and religious affiliation.

The third factor associated with pogroms is the proportion of Jews that sought recognition as a nation equal to that of the Poles or Ukrainians. Among the political options that significant numbers of Jews actually pursued in interwar Poland, Jewish nationalism had arguably the least sympathy among non-Jews. (We do not count communism. Contrary to popular belief both then and now, Jewish support for communism was miniscule at the mass level. See Kopstein and Wittenberg 2003; forthcoming.) Jews who identified with non-ethnic parties that acknowledged at least some minority rights might well have been seen by Polish and Ukrainian nationalists as a threat, but at least they would have gotten some credit from those non-Jews who saw in that identification a reasonable attempt to fully participate in political life as Jews. But even non-nationalist Poles and Ukrainians balked at the idea of Jewish self-government, comprehensive Hebrew and Yiddish education, and other rights the Jewish nationalists were hoping to acquire. Localities where Jews supported national equality with the majority group proved particularly vulnerable to pogroms. In these areas, where non-Jews felt the least solidarity with their Jewish neighbors, Jews were doubly cursed: they contained a greater number of both potential perpetrators and non-Jews who didn't feel enough solidarity with the Jews to intervene on the Jews' behalf. Our indicator of Jewish nationalism is the proportion of Jews who supported parties advocating national rights. We compute this quantity from interwar census data on the number of Jews and the electoral results obtained by the Bloc of National Minorities and the Galician Zionists, two of the leading parties promoting Jewish national rights. We show that the greater the proportion of Jews voting for these parties, the more likely a pogrom.

The role of the non-Jews who do not participate directly in the violence is crucial. First, they may of course warn Jews of the impending attack or rescue them if it is imminent. There are many documented cases of violence having been averted,

Why Pogroms in Some Localities and not Others?

Hypothesis	Indicator	Evidence
Economic competition	Sectoral composition/Jewish free loan assoc.	Low
Anti-Semitism	Vote for anti-Semitic parties	Low
Soviet occupation	Vote for communist parties	Low
Political threat	Jewish pop/vote for ethnic & tolerant parties	High

Table 1: Why do pogroms occur in some localities and not others? Leading hypotheses, the indicators we use to test them, and the strength of the evidence in their favor.

frequently at great risk to the lives of the rescuers. Second, and more commonly, they contribute to what Horowitz (2001: 326-373) calls “the social environment for killing.” Would-be perpetrators may refrain from acting if they do not sense broader popular support for violent activity. Fujii (2009: 30) describes a range of responses to genocide between rescuing on the one hand and perpetrating on the other. It is the bystanders, who neither rescue nor kill, that often set the tone of community expectation for or against violence independent of any state instigation. The most important of these bystanders are authoritative figures such as priests or teachers, whose statements and actions will be interpreted to signal approval or disapproval. Pogroms occur when there are both perpetrators motivated to act and others who either implicitly or explicitly are willing to condone the violence.

It might appear puzzling that in the midst of the Nazi offensive against the Soviet Union ordinary non-Jews could even think that attacking Jews would improve their national prospects. But this is because we have the benefit of knowledge of the horrors that were to come. In summer, 1941 most civilians, Jewish or not, could not have known what ultimate fate awaited the Jews or even how bleak Polish or Ukrainian national prospects were. The Germans did murder thousands of Jewish and non-Jewish civilians during summer, 1941, and often in the most brutal manner, but the ghettos had yet to be fully operational, plans for total extermina-

tion of the Jews had yet to be implemented, and many non-Jews were still being lulled by the Germans into believing they would be treated leniently if they joined the fight against the Soviet Union. Consequently, non-Jewish civilian populations could have seen the lawless atmosphere as an ideal and perhaps their only opportunity to rid themselves of competitors in anticipation of a future autonomous national life. This was certainly the message the Germans wanted to telegraph as they strove to incite local populations to attack their Jewish neighbors.

We summarize the alternative and main hypotheses in Table 1. The hypotheses will be elaborated more fully in chapter 3, and then tested in chapters 4 and 5. In the remainder of the present chapter we discuss our data and methods, and provide a roadmap of the book.

Data and Methods

Pogroms

Those who study ethnic violence under settled political conditions usually have the benefit of being able to rely for information on the press or other organizations that, while certainly not wholly unbiased, at least do not have a direct stake in the conflict. Uncovering violent acts is difficult even under these circumstances due to selection effects. Only larger episodes may get reported, and events outside of towns may be poorly covered or ignored entirely. The resulting urban bias almost certainly underestimates the true extent of violence, and blinds us from uncovering causes that might be particular to rural areas.

Obtaining accurate information on pogroms in summer, 1941 poses even more difficult challenges. There was a war going on, and not the kind of war where intrepid and neutral reporters could traipse around the battlefield recording atroc-

ities. On the eastern front it was a clash of two of the bloodiest tyrannies in history and the scene of carnage that would later be called war crimes. What fragmentary evidence we have of what happened comes from a combination of German military and police reports, Soviet military correspondence, non-Jewish reminiscences, and above all the testimonies of perpetrators and survivors. Needless to say, the amount and quality of information is highly variable. There is an ongoing debate among Shoah scholars, for example, about the extent to which survivor accounts, which may be affected by faulty memory, antipathy toward members of other groups, and “contamination” by postwar discussions, should be accepted at face value in the absence of corroborating information. The same can be said for non-Jewish reminiscences, which suffer from similar problems and tend toward the self-exculpatory. This is not even to speak of Nazi and Soviet sources, which have every reason to minimize the deliberate murder of civilian populations.

The often contested accounts of what happened in particular localities necessitates a minimalist approach to classifying pogroms. Adapting Horowitz’s (2001: 22) definition of a deadly ethnic riot, we define a pogrom (against Jews) as a collective attack on one or more Jewish civilians that is geographically limited in scope and in which the perpetrators are primarily civilians. Although for some places it is possible to reconstruct important information such as the number of victims or the demographic profiles of the killers, the available source material is too uneven to replicate that feat across all localities. This does limit the types of analyses we can perform. Spilerman (1976), for example, has sufficient information to statistically analyze the severity of U.S. race riots. Wilkinson (2004) is able to investigate riot proneness with data on the frequency with which violence occurred in particular localities. We are not so fortunate. Our main dependent variable is thus simply whether or not a pogrom occurred.

Even reconstructing such minimal information about a locality required over-

coming two big challenges. The first concerns identifying localities where pogroms did *not* occur. The evidentiary material tends to report instances of violence, but between the war, the Shoah, and the passage of time it can be unclear for some places whether the absence of documentation means there was no pogrom or just that neither perpetrators nor victims are alive to tell their stories. We compensate for this problem by capitalizing on a recent surge in scholarly interest in the culpability of local civilian populations in the Shoah. Spurred in part by the passionate reaction in Poland to accounts of what happened during the Jedwabne pogrom, historians have begun the painstaking work of locating and sifting through source materials to reconstruct what happened in even the smallest communities in summer, 1941 (e.g., Machcewicz and Persak 2002; Rubin 2006). Our pogrom database builds on this research.

The second challenge is that not every instance of anti-Jewish violence counts for us as a pogrom. A key feature of pogroms is that the perpetrators be primarily civilians. Given that the pogroms were occurring in the middle of a war, it is thus important to establish for a particular place that the violence in question was not military. In some cases sources generally agree that the German military itself directly killed Jews, such as in the town of Białystok, where police battalion 309 burned alive between 800 and 1000 Jews in a synagogue (Szarota 2004: 215). Such acts clearly do not count as pogroms.

In the vast majority of cases, however, the evidence suggests that Germans were either not present, or were present but did not take a large role in the actual violence. Nationalists in Poland and Ukraine argue that even when the Germans refrained from direct participation civilian populations were not responsible for pogroms because the Germans compelled them to commit the crimes. We disagree. The general presence of German army units, police battalions, and mobile killing units in the region is of course indisputable. It is also clear that the Germans

preferred their dirty work to be done by locals in so-called “self-cleansing” actions. For example, on June 29, 1941 SS-Gruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich noted in a telegram that “Nothing is to be put in the way of the self-cleansing actions of anti-communist and anti-Jewish circles in the newly occupied areas. On the contrary, without trace they are to be unleashed and, when necessary, to be intensified and to be steered onto the right path . . .” The question is whether such incitement and orchestration count as compulsion. In general they do not. Few would deny that if the Nazis had truly wanted to compel the locals to act, they could have succeeded in doing so—the Nazis were not exactly timid about using force and intimidation to get their way. Yet there is strong evidence that the effort to incite pogroms had only uneven success (e.g., Brown 2004: 208) and no evidence that local populations were ever penalized for having failed to act on German instigation. In short, while Germans wanted the locals to act against the Jews, they stopped well short of forcing the issue. The German presence does not absolve civilian populations of responsibility.

Election and Census Data

A different set of challenges relates to the municipality-level interwar Polish census and electoral data. The exigencies of war and realities of dictatorship mean that the available information is far less rich than in countries where elections and censuses occur with regularity. The outbreak of World War II precluded a census in 1940-41, and the war itself destroyed the municipality-level results from 1931. Our main source of demographic data is thus from 1921. Poland did have regular elections throughout the interwar period, but Piłsudski’s coup d’etat meant that no election after 1928 was free and fair enough to be usable. Therefore our main source of popular political preferences are the 1922 and 1928 national parliamentary election results. It would have been nice to have been able to download everything we

needed from the ICPSR or other electronic archive, but we are apparently the first researchers to comprehensively exploit these data. They had to be entered from published materials.

The 1921 census is known to have overcounted Poles and undercounted minorities. To compensate we follow Tomaszewski (1985) and infer national affiliation from the more accurate data on religious adherence. Roman Catholics are equated with Poles, religious Jews with Jewish nationality, the Orthodox with Belarusians, and Greek Catholics (Uniates) with Ukrainians. This solution does mis-categorize non-trivial numbers of Orthodox Ukrainians and Jews (by religion) in Galicia who categorized themselves as Poles by nationality. These issues are addressed in two ways. First, we assess the sensitivity of our results when areas likely to contain such populations are included and excluded from the analysis. Second, for Ukrainian areas we re-estimate our models using 1939 demographic information found in Kujbiovych (1983). The 1922 election is considered to be free and fair by the standards of the day. The 1928 election, conducted two years after a coup that brought Marshal Piłsudski to power, was marred by a modicum of administrative interference in the eastern provinces, the principal target being communist parties. Fortunately for us there is a record of these intrusions in the number of invalidated votes, which the state recorded. We rectify the undercounted communist vote by adding to it the invalidated vote.

One advantage of focusing on the 1941 pogroms is that our highly disaggregated research design minimizes a largely unappreciated problem in studies that employ ecological data. All research on the spatial distribution of violence must grapple with an inevitable tension between the level of aggregation at which violence takes place and the ecological units for which there are data to test competing explanations. Brass (2003: 28) notes, for example, that in India and the United States ethnic riots never take place across entire cities, but instead occur

in neighborhoods or even on specific streets. Much the same could of course be said for other countries. Yet at the same time systematic economic, political, and social data to test competing explanations for such riots are usually available only for municipalities or larger geographic units. Important micro-comparative data collection exceptions such as Kalyvas (2006) notwithstanding, researchers usually address this mismatch in one of two ways. Some perform a case study (Brass 2003) or paired comparison (Varshney 2002) using sub-municipal data collected such that they better correspond with the precise locations of violence. While such studies are often insightful, there is no guarantee that their findings can be generalized even to other instances within the same country.

Others aggregate violent incidents up to the level at which existing demographic or other explanatory information may be matched, be it town-level (Wilkinson 2004; Spillerman 1970; 1971), county-level (Olzak 1992; Tolnay and Beck 1995), or even regional-level (Petersen 2002). While such aggregation may be necessary to test competing explanations, it does entail a loss of information, in this case spatial variation in violence. The higher the level of aggregation, the poorer the fit is likely to be between the values of the explanatory variables at the higher level and the values the variables would have had had they been measurable at the micro-level locations where the incidents actually took place. Needless to say, this can lead to faulty conclusions even with the use of exemplary statistical methods. Our data, which are far more disaggregated than those used in other large-N studies, suffer less of that information loss.

A Roadmap

Chapter 2 begins the analysis with an historical overview of ethnic relations in the eastern Polish borderlands up until the German invasion of the Soviet Union in

June, 1941. The roots of anti-Jewish animosity predate the founding of independent Poland after World War I. We first show how 19th century debates on Jewish emancipation and the merits of ethnic versus civic forms of nationalism got recast during the interwar period into partisan struggles over state ownership, economic redistribution, and the proper limits of minority autonomy. We then discuss how these debates grew sharper and more ominous for Jews (and some non-Jews) with the rise of fascism in Germany and the 1935 death of the dictator Piłsudski, whose political party favored a reasonable accommodation with the minorities. Finally, we consider the Soviet occupation of 1939-1941, which spelled the end of Polish independence and further thwarted Ukrainian national aspirations. Because Polish and Ukrainian nationalist historiography argues that the 1941 pogroms were a response to Jewish collaboration with Soviet oppression, we discuss Jewish and others' attitudes toward Soviet rule. In Chapter 3 we flesh out our argument that pogroms were a political response to a perceived threat emanating from the presence of a substantial Jewish minority seeking national autonomy. We compare our argument's predictions against those of rival explanations emphasizing economic competition, anti-Semitism, and Jewish sympathy for communism.

Chapters 4 and 5 test our argument in two Polish regions, the northeastern provinces of Białystok and Poleskie (Chapter 4), where Poles predominated alongside substantial Jewish and Belarusian minorities, and the southeastern provinces of Wołyń, Lwów, Stanisławów, and Tarnopol, where Ukrainians predominated over significant Jewish and Polish minorities. In both regions we find that Jewish population proportion and interwar sympathy for parties advocating greater Jewish national autonomy are statistically related to an increase in the likelihood of a pogrom, but no support for claims that economic competition, anti-Semitism, or communism led to pogroms. In the northeast, where the perpetrators of pogroms were primarily Poles, the relationship between communist popularity and pogrom

likelihood is robust and negative, a finding consistent with other evidence suggesting that non-Jewish communists were among the most resistant to anti-Semitic incitement. In the southeast pogroms were largely a Ukrainian affair, and we find no statistical relationship between communists support and pogrom outbreaks.

Chapter 6 extends the argument beyond Poland and Jews as victims. We first examine other areas that experienced pogroms in 1941, especially Lithuania and Romania, where in both cases the targets were Jews. Here we expect the same factors to be relevant as in Poland—Lithuanians and Romanians perceived Jews and the Jewish struggle for national recognition in broadly similar ways to Poles and Ukrainians. We then discuss earlier pogrom waves in Eastern Europe, especially that of 1917-1920 in Ukraine, which resembled the 1941 pogrom wave in the lack of central government control but differed in the prominent role paramilitary gangs played in the violence. We surmise that these gangs were less concerned with the prospects of Jewish nationalism than in simply terrorizing anyone they suspected as not being fully supportive of Ukrainian independence. Finally, we examine violence beyond Europe, including the lynching of blacks in the U.S. and Hindu-Muslim riots in India. Tolnay and Beck (1995) and Wilkinson (2004) have already found evidence for the demographic component of the power-threat argument in the U.S. and India, respectively. We conjecture that although neither U.S. blacks nor Indian Muslims have sought national autonomy in the manner of East Europe Jews, the threat these minority groups are seen to pose is nonetheless conceived by the majority in similarly partisan terms.

In chapter 7 we conclude the book with a discussion of the broader implications of our findings. First, we revisit contemporary debates on the merits of minority assimilation for reducing inter-group violence. The traditional argument holds that assimilation ought to reduce such violence because the process of acculturation reduces the majority perception that the minority is a distinct group. According

to this view Orthodox Jews, who were by far the most resistant to acculturation and the most visibly different from non-Jews, ought to have been the principal target of pogroms. But the pogroms were not about “otherness” in this specific cultural sense. In fact the Orthodox were among the least sympathetic to Jewish national aspirations, and at least in part supported “Polish” parties in hopes of securing their religious rights. Our findings suggest that cultural assimilation is no guarantee of safety, but also that something less demanding of minorities than cultural assimilation may be sufficient to secure that safety. Where minorities can find common ground with majorities in the political sphere, majorities may feel just enough solidarity with them to ensure peaceful inter-group relations.

Second, we weigh in on the still-sensitive issue of civilian culpability in the Shoah. Many Poles and Ukrainians are loath to accept responsibility for persecuting Jews because it challenges their self-image as victims and resisters of Nazism. On the Polish side this was amply demonstrated by the hue and cry over what really happened during the Jedwabne attacks (Brumberg 2002). Contrary to the claims of the nationalists, however, local civilian populations were not victims of the war in the same way as Jews were. Ordinary Poles and Ukrainians may have died at the hands of both the Germans and Soviets, but they also willingly killed Jews, both in collaboration with and independently of the Germans. They were victimizers as well as victims. It is also true, however, that the vast majority of Poles and Ukrainians never participated in a pogrom. In our view the small number of pogroms relative to the number that could have taken place requires replacing the notion of *national* responsibility with a proper recognition of the local circumstances under which ordinary people committed such ghastly crimes. Perhaps then the painful issue of guilt and culpability can be put in proper perspective.

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