

# The Soviet Occupation of Poland, 1939–41, and the Stereotype of the Anti-Polish and Pro-Soviet Jew

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## ABSTRACT

*The article analyzes two opposing trends that have emerged in Polish postcommunist historiography with regard to the antisemitic cliché of the procommunist and pro-Soviet and anti-Polish Jew. It traces the origins of this cliché and its development in Polish political thought during the interwar period and its persistence during and after World War II. At the center of the analysis is the application of this cliché in the debate about the Jedwabne massacre on July 10, 1941, by four (ethno)nationalist historians: Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, Bogdan Musiał, Tomasz Strzembosz, and Marek Wierzbicki. The article also focuses on the attempts at challenging the cliché in contemporary historiography by Jan T. Gross, Krzysztof Jasiewicz, Dariusz Libionka, and Andrzej Żbikowski.*

*Key words: Judeo-communism, Soviet occupation 1939–41, Polish historiography, the Jedwabne debate*

**T**he collapse of communism has had an enormous impact on the historiography of Eastern Europe, opening up a vast new realm for historical research. This new situation has already borne fruit in various fields. The study of the German historian Dieter Pohl on the Holocaust in Eastern Galicia and the work of

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American historian Timothy Snyder on the ethnic cleansing of Poles in Volhynia during World War II are good illustrations of this new trend.<sup>1</sup> In Polish historiography, some important changes have also taken place with respect to the development of social history, which, prior to 1989, was neglected in the country and in émigré circles, in local and regional histories, and in studies of the post-1945 communist period and of the ethnic and cultural minorities that dwelled in Polish territories in the past.<sup>2</sup>

Polish-Jewish relations and the Holocaust are subjects that Polish historians have begun to study in earnest since the fall of communism. Previously, these “difficult topics” either were entirely omitted from historical research or were presented in a one-sided manner. Recent works on various aspects of antisemitism by Jolanta Żyndul, Dariusz Libionka, and Małgorzata Domagalska, among others, represent examples of new solid research into areas considered challenging for both Polish popular memory and Polish historical consciousness.<sup>3</sup> They also exemplify a new trend aimed at integrating the history of Polish Jews into the field of modern Polish social history and, thus, diminishing the division between Jewish and Polish histories.

This division was dominant prior to 1939, when the understanding of Polish history tended to be an expression of the culture of the dominant national group—ethnic Poles—and its values only.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it was based on an ethnic rather than a civic model of nationalism according to which the (ethnic/Catholic) Poles were recognized as a host nation vis-à-vis national, ethnic, and cultural minorities that inhabited the territories of the newly reemerged Polish state in 1918. The histories of Polish Jews and other national and ethnic minorities were, therefore, not treated as an integral part of Polish history, nor were Jewish historians who investigated the past of Polish Jewry considered historians of Polish society. This phenomenon is reflected in major prewar historical journals such as *Kwartalnik Historyczny* (Historical Quarterly). For example in a 1937 article dedicated to the social and economic development of Polish cities, Stefan Inglot, a well-known historian, devoted just one short paragraph to the main agent of urbanization in Poland—Jews—and, in the same paragraph, he relied on other Polish scholars who portrayed the Polish Jews not as an integral part of the Polish middle class but as outsiders.<sup>5</sup>

Since 1989, the integration of the history of Polish Jews and other minorities and of the Holocaust into the social history of Poland has been a challenging task, closely related to the ongoing process of transforming Poland into a civil society based on an inclusive civic, pluralistic model of nationalism that treats minorities and their cul-

tures as an integral part of Polish community and its heritage.<sup>6</sup> A new look at Polish history is a particularly vital part of this transformation because contemporary Poland is so ethnically and culturally homogeneous. Many important political and cultural figures have endorsed this transformation, but resistance still exists in the spheres of politics and culture. In spite of many historians' impressive efforts to treat minorities as an integral part of Polish history, obstacles remain in the historiography and historical consciousness.

The primary obstacle lies in the tenacity of the exclusivist ethnonationalistic legacy. Contemporary Polish historians have continued to rehearse the tropes of this ethnonationalist history, particularly in recent writings on Polish-Jewish relations during the Soviet occupation of Poland between September 17, 1939, and June 22, 1941. These writings are characterized by a mosaic of questionable assumptions that have acquired a substantial stability since 1945 both in historical writing and in popular memory. Historians of the ethnonationalist school do not shy away from expressing popularly held prejudices against Jews and other minorities. In particular, they continue to perpetuate the ahistorical stereotype of the pro-Soviet, pro-communist, and anti-Polish Jew. The historical debate on Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors*—in which the author investigates and interprets the murder on July 10, 1941, of the local Jewish community of Jedwabne by its ethnic Polish neighbors—and post-debate writings are good illustrations of the scope of this latter phenomenon.<sup>7</sup>

In this article, I will discuss the approaches to the notion of the pro-communist, pro-Soviet, and anti-Polish Jew that developed before, during, and after the debate about Jedwabne. During the debate, Gross and his supporters referred to the notion of Judeo-communism (*Żydokomuna*) as an antisemitic cliché, whereas Gross's opponents, to varying degrees, treated it as an actual historical fact.<sup>8</sup> In the latter group, Judeo-communism served the purpose of rationalizing and explaining the participation of ethnic Poles in killing their Jewish neighbors and, thus, in minimizing the criminal nature of the murder. Despite some differences in their interpretations and their approaches, Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, Bogdan Musiał, and Tomasz Strzembosz have all inconsistently argued that the image of the pro-Soviet and anti-Polish Jew was rooted in historical reality. To validate their position, they refer to primary wartime sources of varying origin, including Jewish testimonies.<sup>9</sup> Marek Wierzbicki also refers to the concept of the pro-Soviet and anti-Polish Jews, though his treatment of this concept differs to some significant degree from the position of the other historians mentioned above.<sup>10</sup> I will discuss all of these approaches in detail later in this article.

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In order to understand the stereotype of the pro-Soviet and anti-Polish Jew in contemporary historical writing, we need some background on the concept of Judeo-communism and on the Soviet occupation of Polish territories in 1939–41.

### **The Stereotype of Judeo-Communism**

No comprehensive historical work currently exists on the cliché of the pro-communist and pro-Soviet Jew, neither in respect to Poland nor in respect to other East-Central and East European countries where this stereotype has reemerged in popular memory and popular and professional history writing in the post-communist period.<sup>11</sup> In the past, historians tended to skirt around the subject of the participation of Jews in the twentieth-century radical left-wing movements in Eastern Europe, not only because of the difficulties of obtaining data on the subject but also because of concerns about the possibility of their works being (mis)used by right-wing radicals in order to reinforce the antisemitic Judeo-communist cliché.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, after 1989, this situation changed.<sup>13</sup> New historical studies based on previously unavailable data and presenting new interpretations of Jewish participations in the communist movements, communist regimes, and communist apparatus of terror have gradually begun to emerge.<sup>14</sup> These studies provide a more nuanced picture of the relationship between Jews and communism and communist regimes, and between the concept of Judeo-communism and the actual participation of Jews in communist movements and regimes in the region. These works elucidate the intellectual dangers of applying the stereotype of Judeo-communism as a departure point for the study of the participation of Jews in communist regimes, their role in communist leaderships, and communism in the region. They also indicate that the visibility of Jews in Communist Party leadership on both local and national levels and the access of Jews to professions and public civil offices that were closed to them in pre-communist periods tended to strengthen the antisemitic stereotype of Judeo-communism.

In Poland, the concept of the anti-Polish and pro-Soviet Jew was reinforced during the Soviet occupation of eastern Polish territories in 1939–41. Yet that notion pre-dates the occupation, and an exploration of its impact on the belief system of the local populations prior to 1939 is essential to understand and interpret the wartime events. In fact, without taking into account the role of this stereotype in political discourse and its impact on society at that time, it is impossible to fully grasp the “dark” aspects of Polish-Jewish relations during World War II.

The image of the secularized and radically left-wing Jew who aims to take over Poland and undermine the foundations of the Christian world has a long history in Poland, going back to the first half of the nineteenth century. Two conservative writers, Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz and Zygmunt Krasiński, originally expressed it in their works.<sup>15</sup> By the end of the nineteenth century, the cliché had entered modern Polish political and ideological discourse. By the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, right-wing nationalistic, conservative, and Catholic elites were using the cliché of the Bolshevik Jew as a powerful tool to evaluate political and social realities.

The victory of the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917 and the subsequent establishment of the first communist state raised a widespread fear of communism in all of Europe. This fear went hand in hand with the identification of Jews with communism, which was enhanced by the sudden promotion of Jews, who had previously been excluded from positions of power in Russia, to political positions in the new Soviet government and state apparatus. It was also reinforced by the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a Russian forgery that accused Jews of seeking, through devious means, an absolute power over Christian societies of Europe.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the specter of Judeo-communism was given life again.

In Poland, the right-wing nationalistic press frequently categorized the newly established Soviet Russian political system as the Judeo-Bolshevik political threat endangering the existence of Poles and other nations.<sup>17</sup> The identification of Jews with Bolshevism was strengthened during the Polish-Soviet War of 1920, in which the Soviets constituted an actual threat to the Polish state. Yet by the late 1920s, when the first communist state ceased to endanger the existence of Poland in any tangible way, the intertwined identification of the Soviet Union and communism with Jews remained powerful and potent.<sup>18</sup>

The right-wing nationalist and Catholic discourse about the nature of communism also contributed to the further reinforcement of the stereotype of the anti-Polish, pro-communist, and pro-Soviet Jew. The discourse defined communism as an ideology and a movement in total opposition to a Polish national identity, Polish statehood, and Polish ethos. The right portrayed communism as a foreign ideology that was intrinsically incompatible with the Christian Polish society. No doubt the fact that all communist parties in interwar Poland supported a non-national agenda and viewed the newly reemerged “bourgeois Poland” as an enemy of the working class and of Marxist revolution was conducive to the strengthening of this definition of communism.

The interpretation of communism as alien and totally incompatible with the “spirit” of the Polish people became popular in the interwar

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period, but it was not new. We see it first in the conservative and nationalist writings prior to 1918.<sup>19</sup> For example, at the end of the nineteenth century, conservative political thinker Paweł Chościak Popiel claimed that “Polish society was immune to the disease of communism” because of its strong Catholic traditions and because its social structure was characterized by a lack of a “developed modern proletariat.”<sup>20</sup> Although Popiel predicted that communism could, in the future, gain popularity in Polish society, he described those attracted to it as “fanatical followers with superficial minds.”<sup>21</sup> In the 1930s, some of the most radical right-wing nationalist authors defined those who were influenced by communism (and by other modern trends considered anti-Polish) as “gente Polonii, nationae Judaei”—as individuals who thought and acted like Jews.<sup>22</sup> They claimed that such individuals were born out of “the dangerous physical exposure” to Jews and the “Jewish way of thinking.” Thus, they were categorized as standing outside the core of “the healthy branch of the Polish nation.”

It is interesting to note that, in some anti-communist writings, communist Jews appear to be defined in much harsher terms than non-Jewish members of the communist movements. In a study of the leadership of the Communist Party of Poland (KPP) that claims to be the first anti-communist work on the subject, Jan Alfred Reguła depicted the Jewish communists as the worst type.<sup>23</sup> In contrast to communists belonging to other national and ethnic groups, Reguła categorized the Jewish communists, including Rosa Luxemburg, as disloyal and untrustworthy, lacking culture and personal integrity. Like other authors with a similar mindset, Reguła attributed these negative characteristics to the allegedly intrinsically non-national (*beznarodowy*) or “intra-national” (*międzynaród*) Jewish character.<sup>24</sup>

The fact that Jews constituted a visible group within the leadership of the KPP, the chief pro-Soviet communist party in interwar Poland, reinforced the stereotype of Żydokomuna. According to various estimates, Jews constituted between 20 and 40 percent of the members of the KPP in the 1920s. The Ukrainian and Belarusian minorities constituted a similar percentage of the KPP’s membership. According to the most recent careful studies, the three-million-strong Polish Jewish community was a keen supporter of the interwar government known as the Sanacja.<sup>25</sup> The support for communism among Polish Jews was minute: the highest estimated figures in the late 1920s vary between 5 and 7 percent.<sup>26</sup> In the 1930s, the highest estimated number of Jewish members in the communist movement is 10,000 individuals.<sup>27</sup> Thus, Jewish members of the KPP and other communist movements constituted only a small fraction of the Jewish community. The majority of Polish Jews

were neither communists nor communist supporters; in fact, they constituted a highly diverse population, representing all shades of Orthodox, Zionist, and Bundist (socialist) members, supporters, and sympathizers. In spite of the range of ideological affiliations among interwar Polish Jews and their overwhelming support for the Sanacja government, the Polish right tended to view them through the lens of the stereotype of Judeo-communism.

In post-1989 historiography, some scholars have either indicated or critically discussed the prejudicial nature of the antisemitic cliché of pro-communist and anti-Polish Jew in the right-wing nationalist political propaganda and political thought of interwar Poland.<sup>28</sup> However, some new works on attitudes toward communism in interwar Poland lack any references critical of the stereotype of Judeo-communism. This is the case with the first anthology of Polish texts on communism, published in English in 2000, in which Bogdan Szlachta, the editor, simply refrains from commenting on those that contain antisemitic tropes.<sup>29</sup> For example, the reader is introduced without any critical commentary to the excerpt from Roman Dmowski's article "W kwestii komunizmu," which is a classic example of advocacy of the antisemitic cliché of Judeo-communism. According to Dmowski, the secularized left-wing Jew is depicted as the alien who constitutes an immediate threat to Christian culture and all European societies:

The origin of Marxism also explains another of its intellectual features. . . . For an out-and-out Marxist, the society in which he grew up and lives is alien. His moral attitude toward society closely resembles the attitude that Israel always took toward foreign people. It divides men into those whom one can and should proselytize and those who should be annihilated.<sup>30</sup>

The concept of Judeo-communism as one of the most powerful tools of interpretation of communism in interwar Poland is also not wholly satisfactorily tackled in the first two-volume study of interwar Polish Soviet studies (*sowietologia*), published in Polish in 2004.<sup>31</sup> The author, Marek Kornat, does recognize the existence of the antisemitic stereotype of Judeo-communism in the writings of the most radical nationalists and Catholic thinkers, such as the historian and philosopher Feliks Koneczny.<sup>32</sup> Yet Kornat displays a certain difficulty in discussing the stereotype in Dmowski's works. Dmowski, considered the father of Polish modern (ethno)nationalism and the leader of National Democracy, the chief Polish ethnonationalistic movement, was one of the main propagators of the stereotype of Judeo-communism

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before and after 1918. In his limited discussion of Dmowski's anti-semitism, Kornat argues that Dmowski's intellectual faculties had weakened as a result of his age in the 1930s, and therefore his extreme anti-Jewish writings of that period cannot be treated seriously. Kornat seems to gloss over Dmowski's earlier writings, preceding the 1930s, in which the stereotype of the pro-Soviet and anti-Polish Jew is already fully developed and pronounced. He also seems to avoid addressing the question of the impact of the right-wing nationalist interpretation of communism on cultural and political elites and its consequences in the realm of intellectual and political thought. He does not ask why the stereotype of Judeo-communism was so popular, in spite of the presence of liberal and socialist interpretations of communism in interwar Poland that did not propagate the image of the Jews as a pro-Soviet and anti-Polish group and thus did not claim organic connections between communism and Jews.

Given the zeal with which the right-wing, nationalist, and Catholic elites of the interwar period purveyed the stereotype of the anti-Polish and pro-communist Jew, the presence and the impact of this stereotype on Polish-Jewish relations during the Soviet occupation of Poland in 1939–41 were, I argue below, significant.

### **The Soviet Occupation of Poland**

In Polish historical terminology, the Soviet occupation of the *Kresy*—the eastern territories of Poland—between September 17, 1939, and June 22, 1941, is known as the First Soviet Occupation. The main aim of the “Revolution from Abroad,” as Gross called the sovietization of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, was to integrate the annexed areas as rapidly as possible into the Soviet Union.<sup>33</sup> A special situation developed in the area of Wilno (Vilnius), which the Soviets briefly occupied between September 17 and October 28, 1939, and handed over to the Lithuanians on October 30, 1939. The Soviets offered nominal independence to Lithuania that lasted less than a year. In June 1940, the Soviets incorporated the Vilnius region into the USSR.

The Soviets aimed to achieve a swift integration of the *Kresy* by encouraging social revolution in the region.<sup>34</sup> In the early stages of the invasion, the Soviets dropped leaflets from the air inciting the Ukrainian, Belarusian, Jewish, and ethnic Polish workers to liberate themselves from the oppression of the Polish masters, “*jarzmo Polskich panów*.”<sup>35</sup>

In the first months of the Soviet occupation, ethnic Poles faced especially brutal treatment dictated by Soviet notions about whom they



could trust to execute their new policies on territories previously governed by their enemy, the “bourgeois” Polish state. The Soviets considered ethnic Poles to be the least trustworthy group of the conquered populations of the Kresy—less so, even, than members of the local Slavic and Jewish minorities. As a result, ethnic Poles who had held prominent positions in the prewar Polish state apparatus were the first targets of oppressive Soviet polices. They were instantly dismissed from offices. This included Polish police, the forest guards, the minor nobility of the borders, the landowners, and groups of Polish soldiers. In “courting” the Jewish, Ukrainian, and Belarusian minorities, the Soviets skillfully exploited the bitterness aroused by the discriminatory anti-minorities policies and practices of the interwar Polish state. Yet, though Soviet policy was concerned with the creation of a new social order, it was never wholly committed to full-scale Ukrainization and Belarusification.

Deportations to remote areas of the Soviet Union were the most severe form of Soviet oppression of all individuals considered either actual or potential enemies of the state.<sup>36</sup> The first wave of mass deportation began on February 10, 1940. It marked the end of the transitional period and the establishment of a firm Soviet administrative structure in the Kresy. The victims of the first deportation numbered between 139,000 and 141,000 individuals, mainly Polish officials, settlers, foresters and their families, members of the Polish intelligentsia, and better-off Ukrainian and Belarusian farmers and their families. A second wave of deportation, initiated on April 13, 1940, resulted in between 60,667 and 61,092 deportees. It included ethnic Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, and Belarusians. The third wave of deportations, already planned in March 1940, occurred at the end of June 1940. Most of its victims, estimated between 75,267 and 80,653, were refugees (*bieżeńcy*) from Nazi-occupied western and central parts of Poland who succeeded in escaping to Western Ukraine and Western Belarus during the early stage of the war. Polish Jews constituted a majority group among *bieżeńcy*. The fourth and final wave of deportation began less than a month before the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. These deportees, estimated between 86,000 and 91,000, were from various regions, including Moldavia, Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. Historians have not yet established the percentage of Polish citizens, both ethnic Poles and Polish Jews from the Vilnius region, who were among the victims of this last deportation.<sup>37</sup>

Poles in the Kresy resented Jews because of the widespread allegations of a prominent Jewish role in establishing the new Soviet regime and in seeking the end of the Polish state. Images of Jews totally de-

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voted to building the hated communist system and to oppressing ethnic Poles filled the pages of Polish reports, statements, letters, and diaries of that time. Although it is difficult to establish exactly how many Jews (and other national groups) passively supported the Soviets and how many hated the new regime, it is nevertheless possible to argue that, except for large sections of the Jewish youth of the Kresy, who believed that communism would end national conflicts and bring social equality, the majority of Jews were clearly not communists. Neither were they supporters of the Soviet state who unanimously supported the Soviet occupation of Poland for "sinister reasons." Some members of the Jewish community of the Kresy did express satisfaction or relief that the Second Republic had ended, but this has to be understood in the context of the anti-minorities' discrimination policies of the Second Republic and the intensified culture of antisemitism of the 1930s. Recent studies by Gross and Krzysztof Jasiewicz provide substantial evidence demonstrating that Jews as a group did not support the occupation of Poland. Yet the stereotype of the pro-Soviet, pro-communist, and anti-Polish Jew was a widespread notion among ethnic Poles at the time of the Soviet occupation and thereafter.

My textual analysis of 26 reports, official notes, and letters sent in 1940 and early 1941 to the London-based Polish government-in-exile from the Lwów (Lviv) and Wołyń (Volhyn) regions demonstrates that belief in the stereotype of Żydokomuna was prominent and that this belief influenced descriptions of the process of sovietization.<sup>38</sup> Although some of these reports and letters recognize divisions within the Jewish community in terms of support (or lack thereof) for the Soviet Union, they tend to view the Soviet occupation through the lens of Judeo-communism. This confirms Jasiewicz's thesis on the transfer of responsibility for both the imposition and the crimes of the Soviet system primarily onto the Jews.<sup>39</sup> Three examples will illustrate this phenomenon.

In a six-page report entitled "Okupacja sowiecka," (The Soviet Occupation), written in the late summer of 1940, the anonymous author gives a detailed description of the Soviet conquest of the region.<sup>40</sup> He divides the occupation into three chronological periods and describes Jews and Ukrainians as the chief persecutors of ethnic Poles during the first phase of occupation in October and November 1939. The author observes that the Soviets themselves had to put an end to these spontaneous anti-Polish activities, but he does not dwell on the causes of these outbursts. The issue of Polish policies and practices toward minorities in the interwar period does not feature at all in his report.

Regarding Soviet deportations, the author acknowledges that ethnic Poles were not their sole targets; segments of Jewish and Ukrainian minorities were also deportees. He underscores a qualitative difference between the deportations of Jews and Ukrainians and that of ethnic Poles by stating that the deportation of the former groups had a purely preventative character, whereas in the case of the latter the Soviets aimed at destruction of the Polish “national substance.”<sup>41</sup> In the section of the document on Polish, Jewish, and Ukrainian relations, the author acknowledges that a certain number of what he calls “rich Jews,” particularly those from Nazi-occupied Poland, sought rapprochement with the Poles. However, he then claims that the Jewish community at large was hostile to Poland and that Jews oppressed Poles.<sup>42</sup> He characterizes the Jews as having usurped power in Western Ukraine on various levels of the Soviet state apparatus and Soviet economy. In order to show the scope of Jewish power, he also cites Ukrainian voices that recalled the pre-1939 Polish state with nostalgia and view the present regime as dominated by the Jews: “I thought that I lived in Ukraine, but it looks as though I am in Palestine.”<sup>43</sup> The author insists that Polish and Ukrainian agreement over Jews being Soviet agents had been conducive in some circles to Polish-Ukrainian rapprochement, though he considers only a small section of the Ukrainian population, mainly from the working and peasant classes, to have “come to their senses”—meaning that they supported the Polish state. In the section of the report on the behavior of ethnic Poles, the author underscores that, except for a few individuals such as the communist Wanda Wasilewska, Polish society as a whole rejected the Soviet system. Poles treated the regime with “disgust and irony.” Furthermore, he asserts, they behaved impeccably during the entire period of occupation, demonstrating courage and a will to survive the Soviet regime.

In “Uwagi co do sytuacji części Polski, zajętej przez wojska sowieckie, kwiecień–czerwiec 1940r,” (Notes Concerning the Part of Poland Conquered by the Soviet Army), which covers the developments between April and June 1940, another anonymous author differentiates between Jews supporting Poland and Jews supporting the Soviet Union.<sup>44</sup> According to him, the latter decisively outnumbered the former. In the former group, he includes the masses of Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied Poland and some sections of politically active Jewish intelligentsia in the Kresy. He categorizes them as an anti-Soviet element that had been persecuted like the ethnic Polish population. In the latter group, the author includes the majority of Jews of the Kresy (*wszystkie inne elementy*).<sup>45</sup> He sees them as actively engaged in supporting the Soviet regime.

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In the introduction to a collection of letters entitled “Listy z krainy smutku, łez i nędzy” (From the Country of Sadness, Tears, and Poverty), written in June 1940, the anonymous author states that all the information provided in the letters is true and completely precise.<sup>46</sup> In the first letter, “Mamy gości” (We Have Visitors), the author vividly describes the conquest of the Kresy.<sup>47</sup> The ruthless Soviet takeover of power is attributed to the actions of the suddenly emerging red/Jewish police (*milicja czerwona/żydowska*).<sup>48</sup> Two individuals are mentioned in the letter: one is a member of the Ukrainian intelligentsia who is portrayed as a person who, though enjoying a high position in pre-1939 Poland, betrayed the country. The second individual is a local Jewish lawyer. He is singled out as responsible for inviting the Red Army to the town.

### **The First Attempt at Challenging the Stereotype**

In 1993, seven years before the publication of *Neighbors*, Gross launched the first sharp attack on the uncritical use of the stereotype of Judeo-communism in Polish history writing. In “The Jewish Community in the Soviet-Annexed Territories on the Eve of the Holocaust,” which is a sociological analysis of the impact of sovietization on the Jewish communities of eastern Poland prior to 1939, Gross forcefully argues against the use of this stereotype as an explanation of violence committed by Poles against Jews during and after World War II. Furthermore, Gross exposes the intellectual weaknesses of the conceptualization of Polish-Jewish relations through the lens of Judeo-communism, and he convincingly explains its roots. He views both the lack of questioning and the direct incorporation of Polish wartime testimonies from the Soviet-occupied Kresy (which “speak volumes” about “the willing and widespread Jewish collaboration with the Soviets and anti-Polish sentiments among Jews”) as “an uncritical dullness on the part of historians.”<sup>49</sup> He also warns historians that an uncritical approach to primary archival sources without understanding antisemitic tropes leads to faulty historical interpretations of events.

In his article, Gross does not deny the existence of ethnic tensions between Poles and Jews under the Soviet occupation of Poland in 1939–41. Nor does he deny that many Jewish youth were Communist Party members and communist sympathizers who joined the Soviet state apparatus in the first months of the Soviet occupation of the region. But he does not use these historical developments in order to pass judgment on the Jewish community, as has been common practice in post-

1945 Polish historiography and popular memory. Instead, he places the group of Jewish members of Communist parties and their sympathizers within a broader social history of the entire Jewish community. Gross concludes that support for communism was “unrepresentative of the spiritual or mental outlook predominant among the shtetl Jews.”<sup>50</sup> In the discussion of the relationship between the Soviet regime and the Jewish minority, he also provides a nuanced picture of the variety of Jewish responses to the Soviet occupation and of Soviet policies toward Jews and other national and ethnic groups.

Gross’s approach to the pre-1939 Soviet policies and practices in the eastern Polish territories differs from the dominant paradigm of post-1945 Polish historical writing on the subject. He analyzes the sovietization process not through the lens of one ethnic/national group—the ethnic Poles—but from the perspective of a scholar aiming to explore the political, social, and cultural complexities of sovietization—in particular, the relationship between the regime and individual agency.<sup>51</sup> He convincingly argues that, regardless of the ethnicity and nationality of individuals, opportunism was the typical response to the Soviet occupation. He interprets the Soviet state as a totalitarian regime that initially gave the impression of a just system in which equality of rights for all its citizens would be realized but, soon after, transformed all of its citizens, regardless of their nationality, into “prisoners without rights.”<sup>52</sup>

Gross’s essay “A Tangled Web,” published in English in 2000, is a continuation of his polemics with the Polish historical paradigm that harbors the stereotype of the pro-communist and anti-Polish Jew.<sup>53</sup> Two years earlier, Gross had presented a version of “A Tangled Web” to the Polish audience in a slim book, *Upiorna dekada: Trzy eseje na temat wzajemnych relacji między Żydami, Polakami, Niemcami i komunistami w latach 1939–1948* (Ghastly Decade: Three Essays on the Theme of Relations among Jews, Poles, Germans, and Communists in 1939–1948). Except for one limited discussion, raised and published by the editors of the liberal Catholic monthly *Więź*, the book did not arouse much interest among historians or the general public in Poland.<sup>54</sup>

The response to Gross’s next book, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, dramatically differed from the response to *Upiorna dekada*. It generated the longest lasting and most intense public debate in fully sovereign post-communist Poland. Why?

*Neighbors* contains the sharpest, most impatient and most compelling criticism of the historical paradigm of Polish-Jewish relations during World War II, a paradigm built on anti-Jewish concepts and assumptions as well as on the narratives of total and unquestionable

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Polish victimhood and overwhelming Polish support for and solidarity with Polish Jews.<sup>55</sup> Everything in this book—its content, its terse narrative mode, and its language—challenges the simplified, naïve, and one-sided vision of modern Polish history. This is an unconventional history book, aligned with the more theoretically oriented disciplines of sociology and political studies, and some of its critics did not take this into account in their analysis of it.

In confronting the antisemitic cliché of the pro-Soviet and anti-Polish Jew in *Neighbors*, Gross goes farther than in his previous works: he presents new empirical evidence to support a entirely new thesis of Polish-Jewish relations in World War II. Gross confronts Polish historians with “unthinkable events,” particularly the mass murder of Jews by their Polish neighbors in Jedwabne on July 10, 1941. One of his main theses challenges the popular historical interpretation of outbursts of anti-Jewish violence in wartime and early postwar periods as revenge for the active participation of Jews in the Soviet regime. Gross demonstrates that the local Jews murdered in the Jedwabne massacre were not collaborators en masse with the Soviet occupiers and that, in fact, a fair number of local Poles from Jedwabne could be found among those collaborators between 1939 and 1941 and again in 1944–45.<sup>56</sup> Thus, *Neighbors* not only calls for the rejection of prejudicial assumptions and one-sided explanations and interpretations of the behavior of Jews and of Polish-Jewish relations in World War II but also challenges these assumptions in a forceful, impatient manner. Gross engages in polemics with the historians in a way that demonstrates his increasing disappointment with the intellectual conditions of Polish historiography at the end of the first decade of fully sovereign Poland: the perpetuation of prejudicial views and biased narratives or their uncritical acceptance and tolerance.

### **Challenging the Stereotype in the Post-Jedwabne Era**

The debate about the Jedwabne massacre and the post-debate historical writings illustrate two opposing schools of thought in Polish historiography: the first employs anti-Jewish prejudices in interpretations of Polish-Jewish relations before, during, and after the Soviet occupation of Poland in 1939–41, and the second challenges such prejudices. Historians who represent the former group are advocates of an ethnonationalist vision of Polish history inherited from the past that only allows for the heroic and suffering visions of Poland and that views ethnic Poles as the generous host group vis-à-vis ethnic and religious

minorities. Historians who represent the latter group are champions of a vision of Polish history that recognizes both the heroic and the anti-heroic or non-heroic pages of national history. They concentrate on the exploration of the particular dark pages of history because the dominant paradigm of post-1945 Polish historiography suppressed them. Thus, their occupation with the negative aspects of national history carries a sense of urgency: to create a more truthful and complex historical narrative of the country and society.

Andrzej Żbikowski, Dariusz Libionka, and Krzysztof Jasiewicz, belong to the latter school. These three historians see the notion of the pro-Soviet and anti-Polish Jew as an antisemitic stereotype. This position, though not always explicitly voiced, constitutes a point of departure in their analyses of Polish Jewish relations before and during World War II.

In his article "Pogromy i mordy ludności żydowskiej w Łomżyńskim i na Białostocczyźnie latem 1941 roku w świetle relacji ocalałych Żydów i dokumentów sądowych" (Pogroms and Massacres of the Jewish Population in the Summer of 1941 in the Łomża and Białystok Regions in Light of Jewish Accounts and Court Documents), Żbikowski describes in great detail the anti-Jewish violence that took place in the Łomża region during the summer of 1941.<sup>57</sup> He attributes these outbursts to many causes, including Polish antisemitism, economic factors, the Soviet occupation, and the wartime situation. The weak aspects of Żbikowski's work are that he does not examine the dynamics between the various causes of anti-Jewish violence, does not focus on broader contextualization of the violence, and does not attempt a comparative analysis. Nevertheless, he provides a complex and plausible picture of the mechanism of the massacres in various localities. He also identifies certain patterns of the violence. His work is based on the traditional Rankean history-writing model, aiming at capturing the details of a singular event and discussing its causes and its consequences. In his analysis, Żbikowski does not use any historical events or prejudicial perceptions to minimize both the nature and the consequences of the violence. Nor does he justify the actions of the local Poles involved in the massacres of the Jews. In the discussion of the role of the Germans in inciting anti-Jewish violence, Żbikowski expresses skepticism about the plausibility of claims that Nazi Germans were the sole architects of the violence and forced Polish populations to participate in it. (These arguments were used against Gross by representatives of the "self-defense" camp in the Jedwabne debate.)

Libionka's work on the Roman Catholic Church's attitudes toward Jews in northeastern Poland prior to 1939 is the most important con-

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tribution to the study of antisemitic propaganda in the region. Like Żbikowski's article, Libionka's study appeared in the first volume of *Wokół Jedwabnego* (Around Jedwabne).<sup>58</sup> Libionka closely examines the various antisemitic positions within the institutionalized local Roman Catholic Church prior to the Soviet occupation of the Łomża region and puts forward a thesis about the damaging impact of the Church's anti-Jewish propaganda on the local ethnic (non-elite) Polish population. At the time, the Roman Catholic Church represented the main moral and cultural authority for the majority of the local population. Libionka's article exposes the difficulties that a historian encounters in analyzing the impact of antisemitic propaganda when the available empirical evidence is limited and when important parts of it cannot be fully recovered because of the passage of time. Libionka insists that research into prejudicial attitudes (which some scholars treat as "an esoteric subject" because of the difficulty of garnering data) is vital for understanding human action: an antisemitic culture has to be considered as one of the major factors in the explanation of anti-Jewish actions. His work reveals that research into prejudicial attitudes cannot be dismissed as irrelevant on the grounds of limited and fragmentary empirical data. His nuanced analysis based on such data indicates that prejudicial views expressed toward Jews had a direct impact on anti-Jewish actions in the summer of 1941.

In *"Pierwsi po diable": Elity sowieckie w okupowanej Polsce, 1939–1941* ("The First Ones Behind the Devil": The Soviet Elite in Occupied Poland, 1939–1941 [The Region of Nowogródek, Polesie, and Wilna]), a detailed three-part study of the participation of different ethnic groups in the Soviet state apparatus and administration in the entire region of Western Belarus, Jasiewicz directly challenges the paradigm in Polish historiography that advocates the stereotype of pro-Soviet, pro-communist, and anti-Polish Jews. In a style partially imitating Gross's voice, Jasiewicz asserts that historians approach certain subjects in a manner that simply confirms their position on the subject held prior to embarking on the investigation of the subject: "We [historians] take into account just what we want to and nothing more than that."<sup>59</sup> Jasiewicz's discussion of most historians' approach toward "national history" suggests that it did not differ significantly from the historical vision among the general public.<sup>60</sup> Thus, one can infer from his reflections that historians tend to draw on the stock of moral and cultural sentiments that are present in the community with which they identify.

Jasiewicz's detailed statistical analysis of Soviet primary sources demonstrates that collaboration with the Soviet regime was cross-eth-



nic and that it encompassed not only Jewish and Slavic national minorities of the Kresy but also ethnic Poles. His textual study of 237 wartime testimonies of Polish soldiers in the Anders Army confirms Gross's thesis about the prejudicial nature of their content with regard to the image of Polish Jews and Polish-Jewish relations. Jasiewicz demonstrates that many of these testimonies are full of contradictory statements about Jews, Jewish collaboration with the Soviets, and the concept of collaboration.<sup>61</sup> In 85 of the testimonies, Jewish collaboration with the Soviets is not mentioned, and the suffering of ethnic Poles is attributed to the coercive power of the Soviet regime. In 88 testimonies, their authors blame Jews for the discrimination and suffering of the Poles but fail to provide any concrete examples of Jewish collaboration. Only 18 testimonies provide concrete cases of Jewish collaboration with the Soviet regime. Jasiewicz demonstrates that, in spite of the small number of concrete examples, the perception of Judeo-communism is still pronounced in 161 testimonies. Within these, 34 testimonies blame Jews alone for the tragedy of the Poles.

Jasiewicz elucidates that, though Jews did not constitute the majority group in the Soviet state apparatus and the Narodny Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs; NKVD), ethnic Poles attributed the most negative aspects of the Soviet occupation to Jews. Poles transferred blame for the Soviet crimes from the Russian invaders onto Polish Jews. Jasiewicz's plausible explanation for this is that the belief in Judeo-communism was fully "installed" in people's mindsets prior to the Soviet occupation. The pre-1939 casting of Jews as a pro-communist and anti-Polish group left a powerful legacy on Polish-Jewish relations under the Soviet occupation. It resulted in the outbursts of hostile behavior toward Jews under Nazi occupation and, in turn, led to the justification and rationalization of anti-Jewish hostilities in the summer of 1941 in the Łomża region. It also reinforced the image of the Pole as victim vis-à-vis the Jew.<sup>62</sup>

### **Ethnonationalist History and the Stereotype**

The main representatives of the post-1989 historiography, characterized by prejudicial views toward Jews and other minorities, are Marek J. Chodakiewicz, Marek Wierzbicki, Bogdan Musiał, and the late Tomasz Strzembosz. These historians belong to the school of (ethno)nationalist history writing in which the themes of martyrdom and victimhood of ethnic Poles vis-à-vis other groups play a key role in shaping their arguments and interpretations.<sup>63</sup>

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Chodakiewicz's works represent the most extreme end of the spectrum of the contemporary mainstream ethnonationalist school of history writing.<sup>64</sup> The following features characterize all his writings.<sup>65</sup> His vision of modern Polish history is rooted in the right-wing ethnonationalistic ideology that originated in the pre-1939 National Democracy movement and its extreme formations. His interpretation of Polish-Jewish relations in World War II and in the early postwar period, 1944–47, is based on the concept of a zero-sum conflict between ethnic Poles and Jews. Chodakiewicz casts the two communities as separate nations engaged in the struggle for survival without noting that they were part of one society in which ethnic Poles represented the dominant majority group and Polish Jews were one of the ethnic/national minorities. Even when he acknowledges that Polish Jews were a minority, as he does in *Massacre in Jedwabne*, he regards them primarily as the carrier of a culture intrinsically incompatible with the culture of ethnic, Christian Poles.<sup>66</sup>

In contemporary Polish historiography, Chodakiewicz is perhaps the first historian who repeatedly uses conflict as the explanation of anti-Jewish violence in modern Poland.<sup>67</sup> This interpretation serves two purposes: one is to neutralize anti-Jewish violence by making it “guilt free”; the other is to dismiss antisemitism as one of the main causes of anti-Jewish hostilities.<sup>68</sup> In many ways, his interpretation of anti-Jewish hostilities is close to the interwar ethnonationalist interpretation of the anti-Jewish violence of 1918–20 and National Democracy's interpretation of antisemitism in general. One could easily reach the conclusion, reading Chodakiewicz's arguments, that the Jews were themselves responsible for what happened to them: “They received the type of antisemitism they deserved” (*Żydzi mają taki antysemityzm na jaki zasługują*), as one of the interwar popular National Democracy sayings claimed.<sup>69</sup>

In his latest book on Jedwabne, Chodakiewicz reverses the interpretation of the murder of Polish Jews on July 10, 1941, to the pre-2000 version, according to which it was the Germans who orchestrated and perpetrated the Jedwabne massacre. He claims that only a very small number of Poles took part in the massacre and that Germans coerced some of them into participating. He also claims that among the few willing Polish collaborators were Volksdeutsche (Polish citizens of German origin) and petty criminals—the latter, presumably, did not belong to the core of the healthy Polish community. Chodakiewicz's position on the participation of ethnic Poles in the massacre is also encapsulated in the following concluding remarks: “Claims that some ethnic Poles participated in the killing of Jews are plausible

enough. After all, war often turns some human beings into beasts. Under such circumstances practically anything is possible. However, it is the duty of a historian to separate fact from fiction.”<sup>70</sup>

Marek Wierzbicki also represents the ethnonationalist school of history writing, though his position is definitely less extreme than that of Chodakiewicz and of Bogdan Musiał, and it appears in many ways more sophisticated than that of his intellectual mentor, Tomasz Strzembosz. Yet Strzembosz’s and Chodakiewicz’s intellectual influences do appear in Wierzbicki’s formulation of certain arguments and interpretations. This ranges from the use of similar phrases in the assessment of discriminatory policies and practices in interwar Poland vis-à-vis the national minorities to the use of similar explanatory frameworks for the anti-Jewish hostilities in the summer of 1941.

Nevertheless, there are differences between Wierzbicki and the other three historians. Musiał and Strzembosz refer to the post-1945 communist period in their discussion of Polish-Jewish relations under the Soviet occupation in 1939–41. This strategy is employed to strengthen the argument about the “truthfulness” of their thesis. Musiał’s study, *“Konterrevolutionäre Elemente sind zu Erschießen”: Die Brutalisierung des deutsch-sowjetischen Krieges im Sommer 1941* (“Counterrevolutionary Elements Are to Be Shot”: The Brutalization of the German-Soviet War in the Summer of 1941), is a good example of a work in which this strategy is taken to an extreme. Musiał conducts an examination of the anti-Jewish pogroms during the summer of 1941 in Lwów, Sambor, Kołomyja, Złoczów, and other localities in Western Ukraine.<sup>71</sup> He explains these pogroms as the immediate reaction to Soviet terror in 1939–41 and insists that his evaluation of events constitutes “the truth,” which is hidden from the public because influential communist circles in the post-1989 government wish to suppress it:

This is a difficult and long-term project, especially since the old history falsifiers and deniers are still at work. Post-communists make up a strong and influential group: the president of Poland belongs to this group. To say that this group has no interest in suppressing the critical examination of the communist past would be a gross understatement.<sup>72</sup>

The insistence that a communist conspiracy has prevented a critical examination of the (Judeo-)communist crimes against the Polish nation between 1939 and 1989 is nothing more than a political statement from the repertoire of extreme right-wing Polish nationalists. This is an example of what can be called the extreme anti-communist

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martyrdom deviation in post-1989 right-wing historical scholarship, which treats Judeo-communism not only as “a historical fact” but also as a part of contemporary reality.<sup>73</sup> The notions of “speaking the truth” and “acting in the name of truth” always seem to accompany this position.

The claim of “truth” also always accompanies another argument about the imposition of the communist regime in the early postwar period, 1945–49. This period is understood as the realization of Judeo-communism.<sup>74</sup> For example, Musiał states: “Apart from Bolesław Bierut, an ethnic Pole, the two other members of the triad ruling Poland at that time were Jakub Berman (the political overseer of the security apparatus) and Hilary Minc, both of Jewish origin.”<sup>75</sup>

Both Strzembosz and Musiał incorporate this interpretation of the early postwar political development into their discussion of anti-Jewish hostilities in the summer of 1941. This strategy is used to imply that, even if the Poles were guilty of wrongs against the Jews at that time, the Jews were twice as guilty vis-à-vis the Poles: the Jews took active part in the First Soviet Occupation and were responsible for the imposition of communist rule in the early postwar period, which meant the beginning of the next and much longer Soviet occupation.

These highly politicized interpretations are interwoven with another main thesis put forward by these two historians about the sole responsibility and active participation of the Germans in the Jedwabne massacre and other similar anti-Jewish pogroms. Yet this thesis is inconsistent with their references to the participation of ethnic Poles in the anti-Jewish massacres. When they refer to this participation, they are quick to minimize its criminal nature and scope, and they insist that, in the majority of instances, it was the Germans who forced small groups of Poles to take part in the anti-Jewish violence.<sup>76</sup> They also contrast this participation with a claim of help offered by ethnic Poles to Jewish escapees. This view aims at balancing the good deeds and the crimes, and it belongs to the key narratives of the pre-Jedwabne hegemonic interpretation of Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust. In this narrative, the Christian Polish rescuers of Jews are treated instrumentally to support the thesis of solidarity and unity of Christian Poles with Jews during the Holocaust. Therefore, the low societal approval of their rescue activities within the local communities—which constitutes an important understudied aspect of historical inquiry—does not feature in this narrative.<sup>77</sup>

Strzembosz and Musiał harbor the stereotype of the pro-Soviet and anti-Polish Jew in their analyses of Polish-Jewish relations under the Soviet occupation and in their explanations of anti-Jewish hostili-

ties in the summer of 1941. Strzembosz employs the stereotype of Żydokomuna in the most unsophisticated way: he basically copies its representations from the Polish wartime narratives. For example, in the article "Przemilczana kolaboracja," which was his first major contribution to the debate about Jedwabne, Strzembosz provides a long list of excerpts from testimonies of ethnic Poles in order to show the scope of Jewish collaboration with the Soviets during the Soviet invasion of eastern Poland in September 1939 and the subsequent Soviet occupation. The uncritical analysis of the testimonies is accompanied by expressions of Strzembosz's sympathy or even identification with the authors of the testimonies:

These are the voices of eyewitness survivors of a crime. In their accounts, they touch on "the Jewish problem" spontaneously and "from the heart," even though no one encourages them to do so. Did Jedwabne Jews, like others, cordially welcomed the Red Army incursion? The accounts recorded during the war, as well as those I obtained in the early 1990s, indicate that this was indeed the case.<sup>78</sup>

Strzembosz concludes his discussion of the Polish testimonies in a similar manner:

Roman Sadowski, a Home Army officer and the husband of Kazimierz Odyniec's sister Halina, was deported into the depths of the USSR on 20 June 1941. He wrote to me on 10 November 2000: "During the Soviet occupation Jews were the 'masters' of this region. They entirely cooperated with the Soviet authorities. According to the accounts of my wife's cousins, it was Jews together with the NKVD who compiled lists of those to be interned (deported). Although I did not conduct a systematic or sufficiently early search of the documents pertaining to the attitudes of Jews from Jedwabne and its environs, we can see that a considerable number of spontaneous and unsolicited testimonies have accumulated."<sup>79</sup>

Strzembosz's treatment of the testimonies of Jewish survivors is entirely different. In his eyes, they cannot be considered reliable for historical inquiry: "After this discussion, I still do not know what happened in Jedwabne. I have encountered reports that seemed to me much more credible than Wasersztajn's. And these reports all told me something different. I cannot ignore them completely."<sup>80</sup>

Strzembosz's natural emotional affinity with the ethnic Polish authors of the wartime and postwar testimonies, expressed in the language of his narrative, may be explained by the fact that he was born in 1930 and so was a youngster during World War II. However, Musiał

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and Wierzbicki, historians who belong to a younger generation—both were born in the 1960s—also take the wartime narratives of ethnic Poles that contain anti-Jewish pronouncements at face value. Thus, in this historical school, the uncritical approach to primary sources that contain long-established prejudicial images of Jews is cross-generational.

Wierzbicki's writing is the most interesting contemporary use of the stereotype of the pro-Soviet and anti-Polish Jew. His approach is a manifestation of the most self-contradictory position toward Żydokomuna. In the book *Polacy i Żydzi w zaborze sowieckim* (Poles and Jews Under Soviet Occupation), which was his first major contribution to the Jedwabne debate, as well as in the article "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na Zachodniej Białorusi w latach 1939–1941" (Polish-Jewish Relations in Western Belarus Between 1939 and 1941), Wierzbicki recognizes that this stereotype represents "a generalization" or "a false generalization of the behavior of a group of Jews"—that is, a minority of Jews within the Jewish community actively participated in the Soviet regime, not the majority.<sup>81</sup> However, Wierzbicki maintains that this fact does not undermine the reliability of the Polish testimonies and other accounts that contain these general statements.

How can a scholar—who no doubt has a good historical knowledge of the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland—justify putting forward this obviously self-contradictory thesis? One clue can be found in Wierzbicki's overarching interpretations of the history of Poles and Polish-Jewish relations under the Soviet occupation and his approach to sovietization. He looks at the sovietization process solely through the lens of (ethnic) Poles. He concentrates on ethnic Polish suffering and ethnic Polish losses, and thus he ignores the severe Soviet policies and practices to which all national and ethnic groups in the former eastern Polish territories were subject, though he knows about them. For example, Wierzbicki is fully aware of the fact that the Jewish middle class and some other segments of the Jewish community were arrested and deported by the Soviets, but he does not take this into account in his discussion of the context of anti-Jewish hostilities. His knowledge of the cross-ethnic makeup of the Soviet prisoners and deportees and of the harsh policies of the Soviet regime toward anybody considered an enemy of the Soviet state are excluded from his analysis of the anti-Jewish hostilities and Polish-Jewish relations in the Kresy in general. Thus, he seems to overlook the complex political, social, cultural, and economic processes of sovietization and the evolving, dynamic attitudes and practices of the Soviet regime toward all national groups.

Wierzbicki also finds it difficult to recognize the prejudicial nature of the stereotype of the pro-Soviet and anti-Polish Jew. This is manifested in his discussion about the reliability of Polish testimonies, which he underscores in the English version of the abstract to his article "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie":

This argument does not, however, undermine the reliability of the hundreds of Polish memoirs and accounts which are highly critical of the choices made by the Jewish population. Their radical assessments were prompted by a combination of the Poles' own decline in status with the Jews' social advancement, as well as by the Jews' presence during every step as the anti-Polish policies of the new Soviet authorities were being implemented.<sup>82</sup>

Wierzbicki provides two arguments to support his position on treating the Polish testimonies at face value. First, the Poles' decline in social status under the Soviet occupation took place simultaneously with the improvement of the social status of the Jews. Second, Jews were physically present during every stage of the implementation of anti-Polish policies by the Soviet authorities. This argumentation indicates that Wierzbicki tends to rationalize and justify the anti-Jewish prejudicial views expressed by ethnic Poles during the war and does not seem to search for their historical origins or to inquire about their nature. He assumes that manifestations of anti-Jewish prejudice in Polish society under the Soviet occupation were the direct result of the actions of the minority of Jews within the Jewish community who supported the Soviet regime during the First Soviet Occupation.<sup>83</sup> Thus, reading his works, one gets the impression that Jews, not Poles, were responsible for the emergence of the negative stereotype of the anti-Polish and pro-Soviet Jew.<sup>84</sup>

In his approach to the manifestations of Polish antisemitism under the Soviet occupation, Wierzbicki also does not discuss how Christian Poles saw the Soviet law officially forbidding antisemitic behavior: Did they perceive it as just or unjust? How did they react to it? These questions would be essential in exploring the mindset of Poles under the Soviet occupation. But Wierzbicki's employment of the phrase "the stereotype of Polish antisemitism" is a clue to his approach to the subject. Wierzbicki understands this term as Jews' prejudicial perception of Poles that had no basis in reality.<sup>85</sup> Thus, when he speaks about the negative generalization or even the false generalization of Jewish behavior by Poles, he does not view this generalization as prejudicial in nature and origin but one squarely rooted in the Jewish actions during

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the Soviet occupation. This reveals the depth of Wierzbicki's internalization of the ethnonational Polish perspective on antisemitism.

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In the case of Strzembosz and Musiał, the participation of ethnic Poles in anti-Jewish massacres in the summer of 1941 is interpreted primarily as revenge for all the suffering incurred by Poles "at Jewish hands" in the previous period: September 1939 to June 1941. However, this explanation of violence contradicts their other thesis that the Germans forced the Poles to participate in anti-Jewish massacres.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, Wierzbicki underscores the notion that the real or perceived participation of Jews in the Soviet state apparatus and the NKVD was the key factor in the participation of ethnic Poles in anti-Jewish violence in the summer of 1941. Yet, in his conclusion to *Polacy i Żydzi*, Wierzbicki briefly discusses additional causes of anti-Jewish violence.<sup>87</sup> One of these other causes, he says, was the tendency of the Jews to lead a separate way of life with distinct moral and cultural codes, which he describes as "Jewish isolation from the surrounding Christian community."<sup>88</sup> Another cause was what Wierzbicki refers to as "the stereotype of Polish antisemitism." As discussed above, the fact that Jews perceived the Poles as a group of antisemites was, he believed, conducive to the development of anger and frustration among the Poles, which in turn led to the eruption of the hostilities toward the Jews in the summer of 1941.<sup>89</sup> This assertion seems implicitly to shift blame for the violence onto the Jews.<sup>90</sup>

What are the common features of the ethnonationalist history written by these four historians? Overall, they share explanations and interpretations of the participation of Poles in anti-Jewish hostilities in the summer of 1941. They interpret it, albeit inconsistently, as revenge for real or perceived mistreatment of and discrimination against ethnic Poles by Jews under the Soviet occupation. Moreover, their discussion of Sovietization lacks nuance. They depict it through the lens of one national group—the Christian/ethnic Poles—and not from the perspective of scholars occupied with the political and social complexities of life for all national and ethnic groups under the Soviet occupation. This is not to say that these historians are unaware of such complexities, but they tend to avoid discussing them in their analyses of Polish-Jewish relations and anti-Jewish hostilities.

Characteristically, these four historians view the interethnic conflicts as bilaterally Polish-Jewish, Polish-Ukrainian, or Polish-Lithuanian relations in which the (ethnic) Polish side is always right and threatened by the others, and the other side is at fault. They use sociobiological interpretations of interethnic conflicts in their analyses of any bilateral conflicts. The zero-sum conflict interpretation is their



model for interpreting the anti-Jewish violence during the summer of 1941. They do not confront multivalent perspectives on the Soviet occupation, on the prewar Polish state, or on wartime Polish behavior and attitudes as expressed by others.

In all cases, they depict interwar Poland as a state “tolerant” of its national and ethnic minorities—one in which minorities enjoyed great freedoms offered by the host nation (the ethnic Poles) or in which the minorities, such as Jews, were not badly off, despite some acts of discrimination and interethnic tension. They also offer contradictory arguments regarding the impact of interwar antisemitism on Polish political culture and Polish-Jewish relations between 1918 and 1939. They tend to argue that the impact is difficult to assess or that it was limited. The latter claim is always supported with evidence about the vibrant political, social, and cultural life of Polish Jewry in the interwar period.<sup>91</sup> For example, Wierzbicki, who is familiar with some important English-language secondary literature on the subject, discusses some features of social, political, and economic interwar antisemitism, but he also states that one cannot draw any conclusions about its impact on Polish-Jewish relations in the Kresy at that time.<sup>92</sup> In *Polacy i Żydzi*, he almost verbatim repeats Strzembosz’s claim, that “indeed Jews may not have had things too good in prewar Poland, and there was undoubtedly ‘a balance sheet of wrongs’ to quote Broniewski’s poem. However, they were not deported to Siberia; they were not shot or sent to concentration camps; they were not killed through starvation and hard labor.”<sup>93</sup>

In their use of such arguments, these historians reduce discrimination and mistreatment of national and ethnic minorities to the most severe forms, such as policies of cultural and physical genocide. They view the milder forms of discrimination that were practiced in interwar Poland—such as anti-minority legislation, restrictions on governmental service and access to higher education, the discrepancy between civil rights law and practice, and policies of emigration—as irrelevant in the discussion of Polish-Jewish relations, in particular on anti-Jewish violence in the summer of 1941.<sup>94</sup> The underlying assumption of this approach is the ethnonational perspective, according to which the interwar Polish state was a generous host to its ethnic and national minorities.

As documented in the Jedwabne debate, these historians describe the last days of the Second Republic during the long month of September 1939, when two totalitarian regimes invaded Poland, by placing the lion’s share of blame for social disorder and the rapid disintegration of the state institutions on national and ethnic minorities: Jews, Belaru-

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sans, and Ukrainians. As a rule, these historians emphasize the role of Jews as a group and accuse them of betraying Poland, "joining the mortal enemy in killing Polish soldiers and murdering Polish civilians fleeing to the East . . . and taking part in fingering their neighbors for deportations, those heinous acts of collective responsibility."<sup>95</sup> They judge the actions of Jews against the Poles without giving specific quantifiers.<sup>96</sup> They accuse Belarusian peasants as an ethnic group of plundering Polish manor houses in the eastern territories, in contrast to the honorable actions of Polish peasants: "It is significant that we find no reports of Polish peasants looting the manor houses in Western Belarus, while such attacks were committed frequently by Belarusian peasants."<sup>97</sup> In the negative evaluation of minorities, none of these post-1989 historians asks about the possible impact of antidiscriminatory policies of the interwar Polish state on the behavior of those minorities. Like their sources, the historians uncritically characterize complex social and political conflicts as ethnonational conflicts, and they do not recognize Jewish and other minorities that inhabited the eastern territories as Polish in the civic sense.

This depiction of minorities stands in sharp contrast to the portrayal of ethnic Poles during the invasion of the Polish state in September 1939 and the ensuing Soviet occupation. Ethnic Poles seem to emerge as a community of heroes, whose daily conduct was qualitatively different from the conduct of all other national and ethnic groups. In this portrayal, ethnic Poles appear morally superior to any other group during the Soviet invasion and the subsequent Soviet occupation. They were not corruptible and opportunistic like the Jews. Instead, they always acted honorably in the face of the two totalitarian regimes throughout the occupations. This argumentation reveals that two entirely different standards of evaluation of social actions have been applied to ethnic Poles and to all other national and ethnic groups that constituted the pre-1939 multicultural Polish state.

These four historians also display a similar approach toward primary sources containing anti-Jewish prejudice. Citations from primary sources are often employed to support the thesis that defines the Soviet occupation in 1939–41 as a period of intense ethnic conflict between Poles and Jews, during which ethnic Poles suffered injustices and discrimination that they believed Jews had inflicted upon them. These historians tend to cite testimonies without any detailed information about the background of their authors or the origins of the sources and without attempts to provide historical context for the sources.<sup>98</sup> For example, in the conclusion to *Polacy i Żydzi*, Wierzbicki refers to three quotations from testimonies of the Jewish refugees from Nazi-occupied

Poland that are part of the Ringelblum Archive housed in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.<sup>99</sup> Wierzbicki uses these testimonies primarily to prove that Jews also saw the reality of the Soviet occupation through the lens of Judeo-communism understood as reality. Yet he ignores refugee testimonies that paint a much more complex image of the relations between Jews and Poles under the Soviet occupation.

For example, he cites an excerpt from the testimony of a 20-year-old Jewish woman from Warsaw who spent the first year and a half of the Soviet occupation in Grodno.<sup>100</sup> The excerpt depicts the Jews as a group that “welcomed the Soviets with joy and triumphant arches and badly mistreated the Poles.” However, Wierzbicki does not explain why the author of this testimony might have held such views. He does not critically discuss some of her statements concerning Jewish existence under the Soviet occupation. Nor he does inquire into the origins of her position or how representative her outlook might be: “The situation of Jews on the Polish territories occupied by the Soviets was extremely good. Thanks to their inborn canny nature and certain talents, they were capable of creating a very comfortable life for themselves.”<sup>101</sup>

He does not mention the important biographical details about this young woman’s life that are provided in the entry to the testimony and that shed light on her perception and evaluation of the Jewish community: “This woman spent a year and a half under the Soviet occupation. Her social circle was non-Jewish, and Jewish issues were of no interest to her. After the Germans invaded the area, she was viewed as an Aryan woman. At present, she travels between Grodno and Warsaw in the character of a courier. She is still considered Aryan.”<sup>102</sup>

Thus, in his treatment of Jewish testimonies, Wierzbicki does not take into account the approach of individuals in the underground Oneg Shabbat organization who were in charge of collecting the testimonies of the Jewish refugees. The collectors of these testimonies, most likely familiar with the standards of critical analysis of personal testimonies set by the YIVO Institute in Vilnius prior to 1939, viewed this material as requiring a critical apparatus and not to be treated at face value. The testimonies were to be a resource for historians, who were supposed to analyze them in a critical manner.

Overall, the “actuality” of the stereotype of the pro-Soviet and anti-Polish Jew on the grounds of its frequent appearance in primary wartime sources of varying origins, including Jewish testimonies, can be viewed as an anomaly in historical scholarly interpretation. It reflects a lack of understanding on the part of some scholars of the fundamental difference between historically reconstructed memory and unreflective popular memory. It exposes the inability to differentiate

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between an actual historical fact and a social construction rooted in prejudice or between the actual participation of Jews in the Soviet regime and state apparatus and the modern antisemitic stereotype of the Jew as a Bolshevik, communist, and anti-Polish element. It also exposes the persistence of prejudicial argumentation, inherited from the past and successfully transmitted to the present. This treatment of primary sources ignores methodological considerations and approaches voiced by other historians who developed a sophisticated critical approach in the study of testimonies.<sup>103</sup>

Chodakiewicz, Wierzbicki, Musiał, and Strzembosz also refer to the works of Jewish historians such as Dov Levin and Ben Cion Pinchuk to demonstrate that Jewish scholarly literature “speaks volumes” about the collaboration of the Jews with the Soviet regime.<sup>104</sup> This strategy resembles the approach, discussed above, toward wartime Jewish primary sources. It involves taking certain arguments and interpretations out of context from their original historical analyses. This “cut and paste” method seems to be the main way these historians cite Levin and Pinchuk with regard to the explanation of anti-Jewish violence in the summer of 1941. For example, in his polemics with Gross, Musiał insists on supporting his argument about the rapid deterioration of Polish-Jewish relations during the Soviet occupation as a cause of anti-Jewish violence with references to Levin and Pinchuk, but he does so without clarifying the differences between his and Levin’s and Pinchuk’s positions on the causes of this deterioration and on antisemitism in general.<sup>105</sup>

In light of newly available sources, Levin’s and Pinchuk’s works published in the 1990s have become outdated. Nevertheless, they give a more complex picture of the situation of Jews under the Soviet occupation than that presented in ethnonationalist Polish historiography. They discuss the various levels of support for the Soviet system in the Jewish community and explain the origins of such support. They depict the severe Soviet policies and restrictions that destroyed Jewish community life under the Soviet regime. In addition, both Levin and Pinchuk consider prewar antisemitism in the region as an important factor influencing majority nations and Jewish relations during World War II.

In a 2003 article, Pinchuk criticizes Strzembosz for what he regards as intellectually questionable interpretations of anti-Jewish violence in the summer of 1941:

The depth of the Polish suspicions and resentment concerning Jewish-Soviet relations was dramatically revealed recently when the details of the Jedwabne massacre became widely known. The prominent role of

Jews in establishing the Soviet regime and the sights of Jewish joy and satisfaction when the Red Army entered Polish territory haunted the memory of many Poles. Facing the genocidal act committed in Jedwabne, there were many who turned to the twenty-two months of Soviet-Jewish relations for an explanation. When the massacre is treated in the context of what happened in the Soviet period, the unavoidable impression is that one is seeking mitigating circumstances, at least partial justifications for murder. The attempt to connect the massacre of an entire community . . . to the behavior of the victims during the Soviet period is historically false and morally untenable. It was not specifically those who were suspected of collaboration who were murdered.<sup>106</sup>

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For their part, Musiał and Chodakiewicz insist that they are “speaking the truth” and “acting in the name of historical truth.” They invoke truth as the premise and aim of their writing, but, in fact, they use it as a technique aiming at relativization and the distortion of the truth. This is apparent in their attacks on Gross during the Jedwabne debate:

*Neighbors* is a model example of the current tendencies toward the “ahistoricizing” of the Holocaust (the extermination of the Jews is removed from the context of the Second world War, while the war itself is reduced to the Holocaust) and toward the mythologization and mystification of the historical events. . . . This is complemented by insufficient “quality control” in the realm of Holocaust research, which has been pointed out by, among others, Raul Hilberg.<sup>107</sup>

The same technique is used in their attacks on what they call the American school of Holocaust history writing about Polish-Jewish matters. They often claim that this entire (unspecified) school is weak because it lacks a critical approach to Jewish testimonies, and, therefore, it presents a distorted representation of the past. In their attacks, Musiał and Chodakiewicz insist that they are capable of unraveling the distorted representation of the past because they are the champions of sophisticated scientific methods that will free the profession from stereotypes about “Poland” and “Polish attitudes” during the Holocaust. What their claim stands for is the promotion of the one-dimensional traditionalist and ethnonationalist image of Poland as the community of heroes and victims:

Although there are so many Holocaust experts in the U.S., precious few are truly knowledgeable about Polish-Jewish matters: many simply repeat formulas they have learned from secondary sources, and Polish-American historians have produced precious little in the way of in-depth studies to offer an alternative. Granted, research into such topics as Jedwabne

was halted by the Cold War and other factors. Because the archives in the East were largely inaccessible, Western scholars were forced to rely mainly on the accounts of the victims. In particular hundreds of Jewish memorial books (*Yizkor bukher*) and even more numerous testimonies and memoirs of Jewish witnesses abound in the frequent accusations of alleged Polish participation in crimes against Jews. . . . Unfortunately, for the most part, they have gone unchallenged and unverified.<sup>108</sup>

### Conclusion

Writing the history of the relationship between a nation and the Jewish communities (and other minorities) of that region, free of the cliché of Judeo-communism in its various forms and free of other anti-minority prejudices, depends on two general, intertwined factors. The first is the ability of historians to recognize the subjective nature of their approach as rooted in their social belonging to a certain community; they must strive to maintain a critical position toward the model of (ethno-)national history, which concentrates on the sufferings of just one community—the majority nation to whom the writer belongs—and discounts the multivalent narratives of other ethnic and cultural groups. In other words, it depends on the ability of the historian to create a nuanced picture of his or her own community, including all internal social and cultural complexities. Regarding the attitudes toward and treatment of the Jewish minority, the entire spectrum of antisemitic tropes, policies, and practices and its impact on Polish society and interethnic relations has to be acknowledged.

The second factor lies in the historians' approach toward primary sources (freely available in the post-communist era) and their willingness to accept empirical data that could change or complicate their understanding of the communities to which they belong. Historians often seem to need to demonstrate their claim to exclusive expertise over the past. This claim is usually based on their command of the primary sources rather than their powers of explanation or synthesis. If historians are not capable of accepting empirical data that complicate their historical theses and refuse to modify their desired visions of history in light of such data, their command of the primary sources and their theses become questionable. In such cases, misunderstandings and misuses of primary sources inevitably occur.

In the debate about *Jedwabne*, various protagonists have used the phrase "the devil's in the details." Perhaps "the devil" not only resides in historical details but also hides in biased assumptions, concepts, and conceptual frameworks, belonging to the right-wing ethnonationalist

legacy of the past that divided societies in the region. The new and still developing critical school of Polish history writing, represented by scholars such as Gross, Jasiewicz, Libionka, and Żbikowski, opposes this legacy; instead, it embraces a civic pluralistic vision of Poland in which the histories of all the ethnic and national groups are treated as belonging to the Polish national past. These scholars acknowledge both the heroic and the nonheroic pages of national history. It remains to be seen whether they will succeed in reshaping historical consciousness, in revising history writing, and, thus, in changing official memory in contemporary Poland.

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## Notes

I would like to thank John-Paul Himka, Sam Kassow, Padraic Kenney, Antony Polonsky, and the anonymous reviewer of this article for *JSS* for their helpful comments.

- 1 See Timothy Snyder, "The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing, 1943," *Past and Present*, no. 179 (May 2003): 197–234, and Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941–1944: Organisation und Durchführung eines Staatlichen Massenverbrechens* (Munich, 1996). The works by the British American historian Martin Dean can also be classified in the same group of historical writings. See, e.g., Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941–44* (New York, 2000).
- 2 For the first excellent overview of Polish historiography in the post-communist era, see Andrzej Paczkowski, "The Poles and Their Past: Society, Historiography and the Legislation Process," *East European Studies: Occasional Papers*, no. 64 (Washington, D.C., 2001).
- 3 See, e.g., Małgorzata Domagalska, *Antysemityzm dla inteligencji?* (Warsaw, 2004); Jolanta Żyndul, *Zajścia antyżydowskie w Polsce w latach 1935–1937* (Warsaw, 1994); Dariusz Libionka, "Kwestia żydowska w prasie katolickiej w Polsce w latach trzydziestych XX wieku" (Ph.D. diss., Instytut Historii PAN, Warsaw, 1998). This scholarly trend has also borne fruit in new academic journals devoted to the study of the Holocaust. See, e.g., *Zagłada Żydów: Studia i materiały*, no. 1 (2005), which is edited by Dariusz Libionka.
- 4 On the relationship between historians and nationalism, see the incisive inaugural lecture on Mar. 11, 1997, at Birmingham University by John J. Breuilly, "Myth Making or Myth Breaking? Nationalism and History." My thanks to John Breuilly for giving me a copy of his lecture.
- 5 See Stefan Inglot, "Rozwój historii społecznej i gospodarczej," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 1 (1937): 401.

- 6 Contemporary Poland is one of the most homogenous societies in Europe. For an interesting comparative study of the role of the Holocaust in contemporary debates about national and cultural identities, orientations, and values in various European countries, including Poland, Ukraine, Russia, and the Czech and Slovak states, see Klas-Görran Karlsson and Ulf Zander, eds., *Echoes of the Holocaust: Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe* (Lund, 2003).
- 7 Jan Tomasz Gross, *Sąsiedzi: Historia zagłady żydowskiego miasteczka* (Sejny, 2000); published in English as *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton, 2001). For an analysis of the Jedwabne debate and an extensive selection of voices that participated in the debate in English, see Antony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic, eds., *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy Over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland* (Princeton, 2004). See also Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, "The Jedwabne Killings: A Challenge for Polish Collective Memory. The Polish Debate on Neighbors," in Karlsson and Zander, *Echoes of the Holocaust*, 141–77, and Joanna B. Michlic, "Coming to Terms with the 'Dark Past': The Polish Debate About the Jedwabne Massacre," *Acta. Analysis of Current Trends in Antisemitism* (Jerusalem, 2002). For an interesting essay on Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors* and his other monographs as well as works generated in the debate on Jedwabne, see Marci Shore, "Conversing with Ghosts, Jedwabne, Zydokomuna, and Totalitarianism," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 6, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 345–74.
- 8 For discussions of treating the concept of Judeo-communism as a historical fact in the debate, see, e.g., Joanna B. Michlic, "Coming to Terms," 15–20; Polonsky and Michlic, *Neighbors Respond*, 36–37, 109–10; and Törnquist-Plewa, "Jedwabne Killings," 151–53.
- 9 For references to the Jews as an anti-Polish and pro-Soviet group in the debate on the Jedwabne massacre, see Tomasz Strzembosz, "Przemilczana kolaboracja," *Rzeczpospolita*, Jan. 27–28, 2001, pp. A6–A7; Tomasz Strzembosz, "Panu Prof. Gutmanowi do sztambucha," *Więź* (June 2001): 92–97; Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "Kłopoty z kuracją szokową," *Rzeczpospolita*, Jan. 5, 2001, p. A6; Bogdan Musiał, "Historiografia mityczna," *Rzeczpospolita*, Feb. 24–25, 2001, p. A6; and Piotr Gontarczyk, "Gross kontra fakty," *Życie*, Jan. 31, 2001, p. 4. For other references to the Jews as an anti-Polish and pro-Soviet group, see Marek J. Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy 1918–1955* (Kraków, 2000); Marek J. Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets: Occupation Politics in Poland, 1939–1947* (Lanham, Md., 2004); Marek J. Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust: Polish-Jewish Conflict in the Wake of World War II* (New York, 2003); Marek J. Chodakiewicz, *The Massacre in Jedwabne, July 10, 1941: Before, During, and After* (New York, 2005); Bogdan Musiał, "Konterrevolutionäre Elemente sind zu Erschießen": *Die Brutalisierung des deutsch-sowjetischen Krieges im Sommer 1941* (Berlin, 2000); and Tomasz Strzembosz, *Antysowiecka partyzantka i konspiracja nad Biebrzą X 1939–VI 1941* (Warsaw, 2004), chap. 1.
- 10 Marek Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Żydzi w zaborze sowieckim: Stosunki polsko-*



- żydowskie na ziemiach północno-wschodnich II RP pod okupacją sowiecką (1939–1941)* (Warsaw, 2001); Marek Wierzbicki, “Stosunki polsko-żydowskie na Zachodniej Białorusi w latach 1939–1941,” in *Wokół Jedwabnego*, vol. 1, ed. Paweł Machcewicz and Krzysztof Persak (Warsaw, 2002), 129–58; Marek Wierzbicki, “Polish-Jewish Relations in the City of Wilno and the Western Wilno Region Under the Soviet Occupation (1939–1941) in Light of Polish, Soviet and Jewish Sources,” *Polin* 19 (2006): 487–516.
- 11 The well-known Russian anti-communist intellectual Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn utilized the stereotype in his work devoted to Russian-Jewish relations in the modern era, *Dvesti let vmeste (1795–1995)* (Moscow, 2001). For an insightful essay on Solzhenitsyn’s work, see Yohanan Petrovsky-Stern, “On Solzhenitsyn’s Middle Path,” *Polin* 18 (2005): 381–92. On the use of the stereotype by politicians and historians representing right-wing nationalist movements in post-1990 Romania, Slovakia, and Croatia, see Michael Shafir, “Deflective Negationism of the Holocaust in Post-communist East-Central Europe (Part 4): Deflecting the Guilt to the Jews,” *RFE/RL East European Perspectives* 4, no. 22 (Oct. 30, 2002). See also Ruth E. Gruber, *The Struggle of Memory: The Rehabilitation and Reevaluation of Fascist Heroes in Europe* (New York, 1995), and Joanna B. Michlic, “Żydokomuna: Anti-Jewish Images and Political Tropes in Modern Poland,” in *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts/Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook*, vol. 4, ed. Dan Diner (Stuttgart, 2005), 303–29.
- 12 For discerning observations on the dominant approaches of Jewish historians toward Jewish participation in communist movements, see Andre Gerrits, “Anti-Semitism and Anti-Communism: The Myth of ‘Judeo-communism’ in Eastern Europe,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 25 (1995): 49–72.
- 13 In the post-communist era, members of the “reemerging” Jewish communities in Eastern Europe and Jewish scholars embarked on open discussions of the subject. For example, the “young generation” of Polish Jews engaged themselves in lively debates about the participation of their grandparents in the communist leadership and communist state apparatus. See the section “My” (We) in a special issue of *Jidele: Żydzi i komunizm* edited by Michał Bilewicz and Bogna Pawlisz (Spring 2000).
- 14 See, e.g., Jonathan Frankel, ed., *Dark Times, Dire Decisions: Jews and Communism* (Oxford, 2005); Robert Levy, *Ana Pauker: The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Communist* (Berkeley, 2001); Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton, 2004); and August Grabski, ed., *Żydzi a lewica: Zbiór studiów historycznych* (Warsaw, 2007). On the participation of Jews in the apparatus of terror in post-1945 Poland, see Andrzej Paczkowski, “Żydzi w UB: Próba weryfikacji stereotypu,” in *Komunizm: Ideologia, system, ludzie*, ed. Tomasz Szarota (Warsaw, 2001), 192–204. For a discussion of the participation of Jews in the Narodny Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del in the Soviet Union in 1920s and 1930s, see Zvi Gitelman, “Ethnicity and Terror: The Rise and Fall of Jews in the NKVD” (paper delivered at the

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- annual AJS Conference in December 2005, Washington, D.C.). My thanks to Professor Gitelman for giving me a copy of his paper.
- 15 See Polonsky and Michlic, *Neighbors Respond*, 214–15, and Antony Polonsky “Antisemitism in Poland: The Current State of Historical Research,” in *Approaches to Antisemitism: Context and Curriculum*, ed. Michael Brown (New York, 1994), 290–308.
  - 16 For incisive remarks on the identification of Jews with communism in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, see Richard Pipes, “Jews and the Russian Revolution: A Note,” *Polin* 9 (1996): 55–57.
  - 17 See, e.g., Irena Kamińska-Szmaj, *Judzi, zohydza, ze czci odziera: Język propagandy politycznej w prasie 1919–1923* (Wrocław, 1994), 143–49.
  - 18 See Andrzej Korboński, “The Revival of the Political Right in Post-Communist Poland: Historical Roots,” in *Democracy and Rightwing Politics in Eastern Europe in the 1990s*, ed. Joseph Held (New York, 1993), 16.
  - 19 On the popular interwar interpretation that the Communist Party of Poland was representing foreign ideology, see Krystyna Trembicka, *Między apologią a negacją: Studium myśli politycznej komunistycznej Partii Polski w latach 1918–1932* (Lublin, 1995), 11.
  - 20 Paweł Chościak Popiel, “The Disease of the Age,” in *Polish Perspectives on Communism*, ed. Bogdan Szlachta (Lanham, Md., 2000), 48–56.
  - 21 *Ibid.*, 49.
  - 22 See, e.g., Jan Mosdorf, *Akademik i polityka* (Warsaw, 1929), 5–6, and Tadeusz Gluziński, *Odrodzenie idealizmu politycznego* (Warsaw, 1932), 6–8. The phrase “gente Polonii, nationae Judae” is a right-wing nationalist paraphrase of “Gente Ruthenus (vel) Lithuanus, natione Polonus.” The latter was in use prior to 1864 and referred to the concept of Polish national identity in pre-modern Poland in which the multi-ethnic and multi-religious gentry constituted the nation.
  - 23 See Jan Alfred Reguła, *Historia Komunistycznej Partii Polski w świetle faktów i dokumentów*, 2nd ed. (Warsaw, 1934). In recent years, Reguła has become a subject of historical investigations. It has emerged that Reguła was a nickname of Józef Mitzenmacher, a Polish Jew who underwent many ideological evolutions in his life. Mitzenmacher based *Historia Komunistycznej Partii Polski* not only on his own observations but also on material prepared by police. Further historical research into his writing should demonstrate to what extent Mitzenmacher (Reguła) is an example of a self-hating Jew. For a recent journalistic treatment of Mitzenmacher that encourages anti-Jewish prejudice, see Jacek Wilamowski and Andrzej Zasieczny, *Afera Joska Mitzenmachera: Tajemnice policji politycznej* (Warsaw, 2006).
  - 24 Reguła, *Historia*, 18–19, 30–31.
  - 25 Sanacja was a coalition political movement created in 1926 by Marshal Józef Piłsudski to launch the “moral sanitation” of politics and society. On the polls, see Jeffrey S. Kopstein and Jason Wittenberg, “Who Voted Communist? Reconsidering the Social Bases of Radicalism in Interwar Poland,” *Slavic Review* 62, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 106.

- 26 For estimates of the number of Jews and their role in the KPP, see Jaff Schatz, *The Generation: The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communists of Poland* (Berkeley, 1991), 75–102. See also Andrzej Czubiński, *Komunistyczna Partia Polski, 1918–1939: Zarys historii* (Warsaw, 1985), 130–32, 214–15, and Moshe Mishkinsky, “The Communist Party of Poland and the Jews,” in *The Jews Between the Two World Wars*, ed. Israel Gutman et al. (Hanover, N. H., 1989), 56–74. Mishkinsky’s article also contains an important discussion of the internal communist perspective on antisemitism.
- 27 Schatz, *Generation*, 98.
- 28 For critical studies of right-wing nationalist theories of conspiracy that employ the myth of Judeo-communism, see Lech Zdybel, *Idea spisku i teorie spiskowe w świetle analiz krytycznych i badań historycznych* (Lublin, 2002), 409–23. The historian Andrzej Żbikowski plainly states that Judeo-communism is an antisemitic cliché that developed prior to World War II; see his “Konflikty narodowościowe na polskich Kresach Wschodnich (1939–1941) w relacjach żydowskich bieżenców,” in *Tygiel narodów: Stosunki społeczne i etniczne na dawnych ziemiach wschodnich Rzeczypospolitej 1939–1953*, ed. Krzysztof Jasiewicz (Warsaw, 2002), 414.
- 29 Szlachta, *Polish Perspectives on Communism*.
- 30 Roman Dmowski, “W kwestii komunizmu,” quoted (without further citation) in Szlachta, *Polish Perspectives on Communism*, 97–104.
- 31 Marek Kornat, *Bolszewizm, totalitaryzm, rewolucja Rosja: Początki sowietologii i studiów nad systemami totalitarnymi w Polsce (1918–1939)*, 2 vols. (Kraków, 2004).
- 32 *Ibid.*, 2: 216–21.
- 33 Jan Tomasz Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton, 1988). This book is widely recognized as an incisive social history of sovietization of Polish eastern territories.
- 34 For the history of complexities of the sovietization process of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, see Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, and Norman Davies and Antony Polonsky, eds., *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939–46* (New York, 1991). On the sovietization process during World War II, see also Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, 2001), and Amir Weiner, “Nature, Nurture and Memory in a Socialist Utopia: Delineating the Soviet Socio-Ethnic Body in the Age of Socialism,” *American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (Oct. 1999): 1114–55.
- 35 Polish reports from the Kresy reported various slogans expressed in the Soviet propaganda. See, e.g., the nine-page report (PRM-K-96, File 34) in the archival collection of the Polska Rada Ministrów, housed in the Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London.
- 36 The number of deportees cited in this article come from Stanisław Ciesielski, Wojciech Materski, and Andrzej Paczkowski, *Represje sowieckie wobec Polaków i obywateli polskich* (Warsaw, 2002). This study represents the most current scholarship on the subject, based on detailed quantitative

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- research of the recently available Soviet archival material. In the past, Polish historiography cited incorrect figures for each wave of deportations. According to some of the past estimates, which were based solely on Polish archival material, the total number of deportees was between 960,000 and 1,270,000. See, e.g., Zbigniew Siemiaszko, "The Mass Deportations of Polish Populations to the USSR," cited in the introduction to Davies and Polonsky, *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR*, 10–12. Siemiaszko's estimated figure of deportees in the first deportation of Feb. 1940 is 220,000; in the second wave, more than 250,000 deportees; in the third, 240,000; and in the fourth, between 200,000 and 300,000.
- 37 Ciesielski et al., *Represje Sowieckie*, 17–18.
- 38 All of the reports and letters come from the archival collection of the Polska Rada Ministrów.
- 39 Krzysztof Jasiewicz, "*Pierwsi po diable*": *Elity sowieckie w okupowanej Polsce, 1939–1941 (Białostoczczyzna, Nowogródzczyzna, Polesie, Wileńszczyzna)* (Warsaw, 2002), 76–120. This book provides an extensive bibliography on various aspects of the sovietization of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus.
- 40 "Okupacja sowiecka," PRM-K-96, File 28, pp. 214–20.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 216.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 219.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 "Uwagi co do sytuacji części Polski, zajętej przez wojska sowieckie, kwiecień–czerwiec 1940r," PRM-K-96, File 2, pp. 3–6.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 46 Introduction to "Listy z krainy smutku, łez i nędzy," June 1940, PRM-K-96, File 4, p. 8.
- 47 See the one-page letter "Mamy gości," in *ibid.*, 9.
- 48 *Ibid.*
- 49 Jan Gross, "The Jewish Community in the Soviet-Annexed Territories on the Eve of the Holocaust: A Social Scientist's View," in *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Studies and Sources on the Destruction of the Jews in the Nazi-Occupied Territories of the USSR, 1941–1945*, ed. Lucjan Dobroszycki and Jeffrey S. Gurock (Armonk, N.Y., 1993), 155–56.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 169–70.
- 51 For a discerning review of Gross's various works on the imposition of the Soviet system in the eastern territories of pre-1939 Poland, see Shore, "Conversing with Ghosts," 350–55.
- 52 Gross, "Jewish Community," 171.
- 53 Jan Tomasz Gross, "A Tangled Web," in *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath*, ed. István Deák, Jan T. Gross, and Tony Judt (Princeton, 2000). Gross also incorporated "A Tangled Web" as the appendix essay into the second edition of *Revolution from Abroad* (Princeton, 2002). In the first edition in 1988, the monograph did not discuss in any detail the problem of Polish-Jewish relations between 1939 and 1941. The incorporation of "A Tangled Web" into the second edition points to Gross's profound personal evolution. Over a decade,

- he transformed himself into a scholar aiming to expose these areas of Polish-Jewish relations under the Soviet occupation that were previously totally omitted by historians, including his own works.
- 54 Jan T. Gross, *Upiorna dekada: Trzy eseje na temat wzajemnych relacji między Żydami, Polakami, Niemcami i komunistami w latach 1939–1948* (Kraków, 1998); a second, expanded edition was published in Kraków in 2006. For the discussion of *Upiorna dekada*, see “Polacy i Żydzi w upiornej dekadzie: Dyskusja,” *Więź* 7 (1999): 4–22.
- 55 Michlic, “Coming to Terms with the ‘Dark Past,’” 7–8.
- 56 For a more detailed discussion of historians’ reactions to Gross’s *Neighbors*, see Joanna Michlic, “‘The Heart of Darkness’ in Polish-Jewish Relations: On the Study of Polish-Jewish Relations During the Second World War in the Aftermath of Jan Tomasz Gross’s *Sąsiedzi*,” *Gal-Ed: On the History of the Jews of Poland* 19 (2004): 95–105.
- 57 Andrzej Żbikowski, “Pogromy i mordy ludności żydowskiej w Łomżyńskiem i na Białostocczyźnie latem 1941 roku w świetle relacji ocalałych Żydów i dokumentów sądowych,” in Machcewicz and Persak, *Wokół Jedwabnego*, 1: 409–585. See also Żbikowski’s important new book, *U Genezy Jedwabnego: Żydzi na kresach północno-wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej, wrzesień 1939–lipiec 1941* (Warsaw, 2006). In the latter, he analyzes the 67 cases of anti-Jewish violence that took place in the summer of 1941 in northeastern Poland. In the early 2000s, during the forensic investigation into the Jedwabne massacre, the number of anti-Jewish riots in the region was estimated at 29. Żbikowski refers to this figure in his earlier article, which I briefly discuss here.
- 58 Dariusz Libionka, “Duchowieństwo diecezji łomżyńskiej wobec antysemityzmu i zagłady Żydów,” in Machcewicz and Persak, *Wokół Jedwabnego*, 1: 105–28.
- 59 Jasiewicz, *Pierwsi po diable*, 93. In the process of the administrative reorganization of the occupied territories of eastern Poland in 1939, the Soviet regime incorporated the Łomża district with Jedwabne and other areas of northeastern Poland into the West Belarusian Republic.
- 60 On the themes of heroism and martyrdom in Polish collective memory of the Holocaust, see Michael Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1997), 43–75, and Joanna Michlic-Coren, “The Troubling Past: The Polish Collective Memory of the Holocaust,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 29, nos. 1–2 (1999): 75–84.
- 61 For full details of Jasiewicz’s quantitative analysis, see his *Pierwsi po diable*, 93–96, 157–206. The testimonies themselves are housed in the Hoover Institution archives.
- 62 Jasiewicz’s book was met with only a few reviews in Poland. For positive but rather brief reviews, see Cezary Chlebowski, “Piekielne wyzwoleńie,” *Tygodnik Solidarność*, May 30, 2003, p. 35, and Andrzej Żbikowski, “W poszukiwaniu wroga,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Apr. 29, 2003, pp. 16–17. Żbikowski’s review also discusses Marek Wierzbicki’s *Polacy i Żydzi* and Tomasz Strzembosz’s articles published in the debate about Jedwabne.

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Andrzej Talaga criticized Jasiewicz's book in *Nowe Państwo* 5 (2003): 42–43. Very brief critical statements by Tomasz Strzembosz, Piotr Gontarczyk, Leszek Żebrowski, and Marek Wierzbicki accompanied Talaga's review. Wierzbicki was the only scholar who praised Jasiewicz for showing that collaboration with the Soviets was cross-ethnic, but he also accused Jasiewicz of making unacceptable, emotionally charged arguments about the antisemitism of Roman Catholic clergy in World War II. The subject of the antisemitism of the Roman Catholic Church in Nazi- and Soviet-occupied Poland during World War II is still, to some degree, a "taboo subject." Therefore, it is one of the least researched areas. In his book, Jasiewicz published archival material revealing that some high-ranking members of the clergy who were involved in underground activities during the war nevertheless displayed radical ethnonationalistic views toward the Jews.

- 63 On the strong influence of martyrdom interpretations in Polish historiography after 1989, see Paczkowski, "The Poles," 26–27.
- 64 See, e.g., Chodakiewicz, *Żydzi i Polacy*; Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets*; and Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust*.
- 65 This short overview is based on my reading of Chodakiewicz's books and on reviews of Chodakiewicz's works by other scholars. See Antony Polonsky's review of Chodakiewicz's *After the Holocaust* in *American Historical Review* 109, no. 3 (2004): 1000; David Engel's review of Chodakiewicz's *After the Holocaust* in *Polin* 18 (2005): 424–28; Jerzy Tomaszewski's review of Chodakiewicz's *Żydzi i Polacy* in *Polin* 19 (2006): 479–86; and Klaus-Peter Friedrich's review of Chodakiewicz's *After the Holocaust* and *Between Nazis and Soviets: Occupation Politics in Poland, 1939–1947* in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 21, no. 1 (2007): 135–46. I would also like to thank Padraic Kenney for sharing with me his analysis of Chodakiewicz's *After the Holocaust*, which constitutes a part of Kenney's article "After the Blank Spots Are Filled: Recent Perspectives on Poland," *Journal of Modern History* 79, no. 1 (2007): 134–61. All of these scholars point to Chodakiewicz's lack of coherent and consistent interpretations. They critically discuss his contradictory and murky arguments and illicit comparisons. I agree with them that Chodakiewicz's works cannot be viewed as enriching new investigations of Polish history but should be considered as highly distorted and misguided historical reconstructions of events.
- 66 Chodakiewicz, *Massacre in Jedwabne*. He propounds the same supposition in his review of Ewa Kurek, *Poza granicą solidarności: Stosunki polsko-żydowskie, 1939–1945* (Kielce, 2006), a highly partisan book that presents Polish-Jewish relations as a conflict between two incompatible civilizations. See Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "Bez wspólnoty," *Glaukopis*, nos. 7–8 (2007): 354–78.
- 67 For "the zero-sum conflict" interpretation of the early postwar anti-Jewish violence, see Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust*, 67–158. For the zero-sum conflict interpretation of Polish-Jewish relations in World War II, see, e.g., Marek J. Chodakiewicz, Piotr Gontarczyk, and Leszek

- Żebrowski, *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR*, 3 vols. (Warsaw, 1997–99), esp. vol. 2. For a discussion of the tautological nature of the use of conflict as an explanation, see Helen Fein, *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective* (London, 1993), 31–43.
- 68 The zero-sum conflict interpretation of anti-Jewish violence seems to have become an attractive position in Polish history writing on the interwar period. See, e.g., Piotr Gontarczyk, *Pogrom? Zajścia polsko-żydowskie w Przytyku 9 marca 1939 r. Mity, fakty, Dokumenty* (Biała Podlaska-Pruszków, 2000).
- 69 On antisemitism as a phenomenon caused by the behavior of Jews, see Libionka, “Duchowieństwo diecezji łomżyńskiej,” 116–17, and Joanna Michlic-Coren, “Anti-Jewish Violence in Poland, 1918–1939 and 1945–1947,” *Polin* 13 (2000): 34–61. The impact of such interpretations of antisemitism on scholarly works in Poland has not yet been fully investigated.
- 70 See Chodakiewicz, *Massacre in Jedwabne*, 178–79. Chodakiewicz’s book on Jedwabne was already advertised and highly praised in the right-wing press in 2002. See, e.g., Agata Kłopotowska, “Zbrodnia wyreżyserowana,” *Gazeta Polska*, July 10, 2002, pp. 15–16.
- 71 For a critical review in English of Musiał’s approach toward the anti-Jewish hostilities in the summer of 1941, see Anders Rudling, “Bogdan Musiał and the Question of Jewish Responsibility for the Pogroms in Lviv in the Summer of 1941,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 35, no. 1 (June 2005): 69–89.
- 72 Musiał, *Konterrevolutionäre Elemente*, 15. See also the important critical review by Dietel Pohl in H-Soz-u-Kult, posted Apr. 30, 2001, review no. 17 (649), <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/id=546> (accessed July 21, 2007).
- 73 On “martyrdom deviation” and the politicization of historiography, see Paczkowski, “The Poles,” 28.
- 74 For an analysis of the implicit references to the early postwar communist period in Tomasz Strzembosz’s various articles about Jedwabne, see Michlic, “Coming to Terms with the Dark Past,” 15–17.
- 75 See Bogdan Musiał, “The Pogrom in Jedwabne: Critical Remarks About Jan T. Gross’s *Neighbors*,” in Polonsky and Michlic, *Neighbors Respond*, 311–12.
- 76 On the role of Germans, see, e.g., *ibid.*, 332–40, and Tomasz Strzembosz, “Inny obraz sąsiadów,” *Rzeczpospolita*, Mar. 31–Apr. 1, 2001, pp. A6–A7.
- 77 For a recent discussion about the methodological problems surrounding the new historical investigation of Christian Polish rescuers of Jews initiated by the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, see “Czy państwo ma rządzić historią,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, June 17–18, 2006, pp. 18–19; see particularly the remarks made by Barbara Engelking-Boni and Daniel Grynberg.
- 78 Quoted from the English version of “Przemilczana kolaboracja”: Tomasz Strzembosz, “Collaboration Passed Over in Silence,” in Polonsky and Michlic, *Neighbors Respond*, 228.
- 79 *Ibid.*, 232.

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- 80 The voice of Tomasz Strzembosz in “A Roundtable Discussion: Jedwabne—Crime and Memory,” originally published on Mar. 3, 2001, in *Rzeczpospolita*. See Polonsky and Michlic, *Neighbors Respond*, 265.
- 81 For the short, popularized version of Wierzbicki’s work on the subject, see Marek Wierzbicki, “Droga do prawdy,” *Gość Niedzielny*, July 7, 2002. In May 2002, Wierzbicki’s *Polacy i Żydzi* was the subject of a discussion organized by the quarterly *Frona*, by a student organization of the University of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, and by the Warsaw Section of Catholic Intelligentsia Club. For the report on this discussion, see Waldemar Zyskiewicz, “Syndrom Jedwabnego,” *Tygodnik Solidarność*, May 24, 2005. For a debate about Wierzbicki’s *Polacy i Żydzi*, see Andrzej Żbikowski’s review of that work in *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, no. 2 (2002): 304–17, and Wierzbicki’s reply in *Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość*, no. 3 (2003): 333–45. This exchange exemplifies the emotionally charged debate about Jedwabne. My thanks to Marek Wierzbicki for providing me with these articles.
- 82 For the English version of the abstract to Wierzbicki, “Stosunki polsko-żydowskie,” see Machcewicz and Persak, *Wokół Jedwabnego*, 1: 494–95.
- 83 Wierzbicki, “Stosunki polsko-żydowskie,” 145–49.
- 84 *Ibid.*, 152–54.
- 85 Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Żydzi*, 224.
- 86 See, e.g., Strzembosz, “Collaboration Passed Over in Silence,” 221–25, and Musiał, “Pogrom in Jedwabne,” 327–40.
- 87 Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Żydzi*, 223–27.
- 88 *Ibid.*, 224.
- 89 *Ibid.*, 225.
- 90 On blaming the victims for the hostilities directed against them in scholarly literature, see Paul R. Brass, *Riots and Pogroms* (New York, 1996), 1–55.
- 91 See, e.g., Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Żydzi*, 12–36.
- 92 *Ibid.*, 34.
- 93 Strzembosz, “Collaboration Passed Over in Silence,” 228.
- 94 For discerning observations about the failure of interwar Poland to build a modern civic society and the consequences of that failure on interethnic relations between 1939 and 1941, see Ilya Prizel, “Jedwabne: Will the Right Question Be Raised? Review of Jan Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*,” *East European Politics and Societies* 16, no. 1 (2002): 278–90.
- 95 Strzembosz, “Collaboration Passed Over in Silence,” 228. On the negative behavior of the Belarusians, see also Wierzbicki, “Stosunki polsko-żydowskie,” 130–31.
- 96 Jan T. Gross was perhaps the first scholar who discussed the use of large-scale quantifiers in relation to minorities and their absence from the discussion of the social actions of ethnic Poles. See Gross’s voice in “A Roundtable Discussion: Jedwabne—Crime and Memory,” in Polonsky and Michlic, *Neighbors Respond*, 260–61.
- 97 *Ibid.*, 224 n. 5.



- 98 Andrzej Żbikowski argues for historical contextualization of the Jewish testimonies in "Konflikty narodowościowe," 409–12.
- 99 For a collection of 46 testimonies of Jewish refugees, see Andrzej Żbikowski, ed., *Archiwum Ringelbluma: Konspiracyjne Archiwum Getta Warszawy*, vol. 3, *Relacje z Kresów* (Warsaw, 2000). Żbikowski is also the author of a detailed textual analysis of these testimonies; see his "Konflikty narodowościowe."
- 100 Wierzbicki, *Polacy i Żydzi*, 222–23.
- 101 Żbikowski, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, 148. The entire testimony of the 20-year-old Jewish woman from Warsaw is in *ibid.*, 147–50; it was originally written in Polish (Archives of Ringelblum 1, no. 934).
- 102 Żbikowski, *Archiwum Ringelbluma*, 147.
- 103 Regarding his project on the history of Buczacz, Omer Bartov provides discerning reflections about both the limits of the testimonies and the need to integrate the picture that emerges from a critical analysis of the testimonies into a wider historical context. See Omer Bartov, "From the Holocaust in Galicia to Contemporary Genocide: Common Ground—Historical Differences," Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Annual Lecture, Dec. 17, 2002, United States Memorial Holocaust Museum, Washington, D.C. Bartov's work provides an exemplary model of working with testimonies in both a dispassionate and an empathic way.
- 104 The two most widely cited works are Dov Levin, *The Lesser of Two Evils: Eastern European Jewry Under Soviet Rule, 1939–1941* (Philadelphia, 1995), and Ben Cion Pinchuk, *Shtetl Jews Under the Soviet Rule: Eastern Poland on the Eve of the Holocaust* (Oxford, 1990). Marek Wierzbicki cites Dov Levin in *Polacy i Żydzi* and "Stosunki polsko-żydowskie," Tomasz Strzembosz via Wierzbicki in *Antysowiecka partyzantka* and Chodakiewicz in *Between Nazis and the Soviets*. Wierzbicki frequently cites Pinchuk and is also familiar with other works by Dov Levin, such as "The Jews of Vilna Under the Soviet Rule, 19 September–28 October 1939," *Polin*, no. 9 (1996): 107–37, which he cites in *Polacy i Żydzi*. Musiał, too, cites Levin and Pinchuk; see Musiał, "Pogrom in Jedwabne," 329.
- 105 *Ibid.* Musiał's statement is supported by a reference (*ibid.*, 329 n. 71) to Pinchuk, *Shtetl Jews under Soviet Rule*, and Dov Levin, *Lesser of Two Evils*.
- 106 Ben Cion Pinchuk, "Facing Hitler and Stalin: On the Subject of Jewish 'Collaboration' in Soviet-Occupied Eastern Poland, 1939–1941," in *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews During the Holocaust and Its Aftermath*, ed. Joshua D. Zimmerman (New Brunswick, N.J., 2003), 67.
- 107 Musiał, "Pogrom in Jedwabne," 340–41. In his reference to Raul Hilberg, Musiał fails to realize that Hilberg was the doyen of "the perpetrator history school" and that his consistently negative approach toward the use of Jewish testimonies in the reconstruction of the past has now been abandoned by key scholars in the field, including Christopher Browning, who originally came from the same school of Holocaust history writing as Hilberg. See Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison, Wis., 2003).

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- Next to Omer Bartov, Saul Friedländer, another doyen of Holocaust studies, has become the main champion of the inclusion of Jewish testimonies in the study of the event. See Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York, 2007).
- 108 Chodakiewicz, *Massacre in Jedwabne*, 178. See also the interview with Bogdan Musiał, “Nie wolno się bać: O książce Jana Grossa i stosunkach polsko-żydowskich z Bogdanem Musiałem rozmawia Paweł Paliwoda,” *Życie*, Feb. 2, 2001, [www.naszawitryna.pl/jedwabne\\_61.html](http://www.naszawitryna.pl/jedwabne_61.html) (accessed July 20, 2007).