The Phoenix Effect of State Repression: Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust

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Online Appendix

Beyond The Three Ghettos

An observable implication of my theory is that *sustained* Jewish resistance should have been most common in Eastern Poland—the region where both Jewish communists (in 1919-39) and Zionists (in 1939-41) were subject to selective repression that allowed them to acquire operational security skills. Sustained Jewish resistance should be less common in other parts of Poland and in the pre-1939 USSR. Coding underground organizations is not an easy task, however. The very nature of their work, resources, and environment forced many Jewish resistance groups to do their best to leave as minimal a paper trail as possible. If all members of the underground group were deported and killed when the ghetto was liquidated, we will be unlikely to know about this organization. The second best, though certainly not ideal, option is to focus on more clearly observable behavior, namely ghetto uprisings, defined as organized, open Jewish armed resistance *inside* the ghetto.¹ Even if all the Jewish fighters were killed, as happened in a number of uprisings, the mere instances of anti-German violence were noted, reported, and remembered by the German authorities, local non-Jewish population, anti-Nazi guerillas in the forests, and Allies' intelligence agents.

¹ This definition excludes spontaneous, individual acts of resistance and resistance outside the ghettos.

My theory predicts that organized uprisings, which required a sustained underground effort to carry out, would also be concentrated in Eastern Poland. Furthermore, the comparison of the Minsk, Kraków, and Białystok ghettos suggests a direct linkage between the likelihood of uprising and the Zionists' leading role in the underground. The Zionists, trying to defend Jewish honor, generally preferred a suicidal but symbolic fight inside the ghetto; the communists did not put such an emphasis on Jewish identity and preferred smuggling people into the forests. Yet, in Kraków the Zionist underground was weak, unskilled, dependent on a partnership with the communists, and failed to rebel despite an explicit desire to do so. In Białystok, where the Zionists gained underground experience prior to the Nazi occupation, they not only rebelled inside the ghetto but managed to convince the communists to join the uprising.

I have collected data on more than one thousand ghettos established by the Nazis in Poland and the USSR—the main killing fields of the Holocaust. The number of uprisings in the ghettos is not high; yet the pattern (Table 1) is clear: Eastern Poland was indeed the epicenter of ghetto uprisings, and given the gargantuan differences in manpower and weapons between Jewish civilians and the German military, the fact that seven percent of the ghettos in that region openly rebelled is remarkable. No less remarkable is that the number of uprisings in Eastern Poland is almost seven times higher than in the rest of Poland. The absolute number of ghettos was similar in Eastern Poland and the rest of the country, and in 1939 the Polish territory was split almost equally between Germany and the USSR. The concentration of the Jewish population, however, was quite different in the two regions—slightly more than one million Jews in Eastern Poland versus two million in the rest of the country. Thus, the concentration of an ethnic group—which, according to the literature is an important driver of nationalist violence (i.e. Toft 2003; Weidmann 2009)—was substantially *higher* in the area that witnessed fewer

uprisings. Even if we acknowledge that the much higher concentration of Jews in non-Eastern Poland was driven to a substantial extent by the two largest Jewish communities in the country, Warszawa (Warsaw) and Łódź, and remove them from the data, the concentration of Jews in Eastern Poland will still be lower than in the rest of the country.

Region	Poland	Poland	USSR	
	(East)	(Rest)		
Ghettos Total	317	360	328	
Uprisings	23	4	3	
%	7.26	1.11	0.91	
Pearson $X^2 = 29.1830(2)$, p < 0.001				

 Table 1. Ghetto Uprisings during the Holocaust (1939 borders)

The low number of uprisings in the pre-1939 USSR is in line with the theory's observable implication, but the paucity of historical data does not allow me to completely rule out potential alternative explanations, such as Soviet evacuation policies (Manley 2012). Furthermore, this comparison cannot tell us whether there is indeed a linkage between Zionism, location in the Soviet occupation zone in 1939, and the likelihood of uprising. To better unpack this relationship the most illuminating comparison would be between ghettos located in Eastern Poland and the rest of the country.

In the following paragraphs I conduct a simple econometric analysis of patterns of uprisings in Jewish ghettos, located in what was the interwar Poland. First, I describe the data and then proceed to the analysis itself. The data consist of the three main datasets: the Jewish Ghettos dataset, the 1928 Polish National Election Returns dataset, and the 1937 and 1939 Zionist Organization Elections Returns dataset.

Jewish Ghettos Dataset

The Jewish Ghettos dataset includes data on 677 ghettos established by the Nazis in the territory of the pre-WWII Poland. The data include information on the ghetto population, dates of establishment and liquidation, whether the ghetto was enclosed by a physical barrier that prevented contacts with the outside world, pre-war census data on the Jewish community, and data on instances of rebellion. The bulk of the information comes from the most recent and comprehensive data collection effort on the Jewish ghettos: the second volume of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's (USHMM) *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos*. Data that could not be found in the USHMM encyclopedia are from *The Yad Vashem Encyclopedia of the Ghettos during the Holocaust, The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust*, the Hebrew-language *Encyclopedia of Jewish Communities (Pinkas Hakehilot)*, the 1921 Polish censuses, the Polish Żydowski Instytut Historyczny (Jewish Historical Institute) list of pre-war Jewish communities in Poland, the Blackbook of Localities Whose Jewish Population *Was Exterminated by the Nazis*, and numerous Jewish communities' Memorial (*Yizkor*) books.

This is the largest existing dataset on the Jewish ghettos in Poland. However, the data have several shortcomings. First, there is an eighteen-year gap between the 1921 census data and the outbreak of the WWII. Unfortunately, detailed results of the 1931 Polish census seem not to have survived the war, and the data are available mainly at the *powiat* (county) level. What mitigates this problem is the availability of data on ghetto populations, which can be used instead of census data (although the number of ghetto inhabitants fluctuated over time). This bias, however, is systematic and affects all the ghettos in the dataset.

Second, the census data are not without problems. The number of Jews in the census is underreported due to the wording of census questions, which were explicitly designed to artificially increase the reported number of ethnic Poles in the country. While it is hard to determine which, if any Jewish communities were more likely to be affected by this problem than others, the ghetto population data also mitigate the biased census data problem.

1928 Polish National Elections Returns Dataset

The data in this dataset are based on the results of the 1928 Polish election, published in Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Statystyka Wyborów do Sejmu i Senatu Odbytych w Dniu 4 i 11 Marca 1928 Roku* (Warsaw, 1930). The election results were published at the locality level; hence, the electoral data correspond to the data on ghettos. Out of 677 Polish localities in which ghettos were established, I have electoral returns from 569. The results were not published for localities with less than 500 voters, and several ghettos were created in places that before the WWII were agricultural estates with no Jewish population. Figure 1 presents a typical excerpt from the election results data book.

The 1928 election was the last free (by the standards of the day) election held in pre-war Poland and offered the Jewish electorate a wide range of voting choices. They could vote for the pro-government BBWR party affiliated with the country's leader and founding father Józef Piłsudski, a popular figure among the Polish Jews; they also could vote for Jewish parties of various ideological stripes. While the communist party itself did not take part in the election, various pro-communist or proxy-communist parties did (Kopstein and Wittenberg 2003). Following Kopstein and Wittenberg's coding, I aggregate all the pro-communist and communist proxy parties into one voting bloc. There were four purely Jewish parties that competed in the elections: the socialist anti-Zionist *Bund*; the Zionist-Marxist *Poalei Tsion*; the Jewish National Union of Little Poland, dominated by moderate Zionists from the former Austro-Hungarian Galicia; and the General Jewish National Bloc, representing the religious-orthodox *Agudat Yisroel* (also known as *Aguda*). The Bloc of National Minorities (BNM), although striving to unite and represent all of Poland's ethnic minorities, was created and led by Yitzhak Greenboim, the leader of Polish Zionists. The BNM attracted numerous Jewish voters, mainly Zionists in the urban areas of Central and Eastern Poland (with the exception of Galicia), where the vast majority of ghettos were located. Here I follow Kopstein and Wittenberg's "not perfect, but reasonable" (2011, 9) assumption that it was only ethnically non-Poles, and particularly the Jews, that supported the BNM. The BNM was a loose coalition established and led by Zionists. Some Zionists, however, were more committed and organized than others. The 1937 and 1939 Zionist Organization (ZO) Congresses electoral returns allow for an analysis of the number and ideological preferences of these people.

1937 and 1939 Zionist Organization Elections Dataset

The ZO was established in 1897 as an umbrella organization for the Zionist movement that sought the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The ZO Congresses were held every two years, and the right to elect delegates was granted to every dues-paying member. Only Jews were allowed to join the ZO. A proportional representation voting system and party lists were used to contest elections. For this study I use the local-level ZO Congress Electoral Commissions protocols from 1937 and 1939. These are the only existing local-level protocols from Poland, and they are located at the Central Zionist Archives (CZA) in Jerusalem: Mahleket Irgun, Folders S5/1703, S5/1773, S5/1774, S5/1801/1, S5/1801/2, and S5/1801/3.

An advantage of the ZO returns is that the data cover the immediate pre-war period—the 1939 ZO elections took place just a month before the Nazi invasion of Poland. The downside is that the data are incomplete—some protocols were most likely destroyed during the Holocaust and did not reach the CZA. Furthermore, the right-wing Revisionist Zionists split from the ZO in 1935 to establish the New Zionist Organization (NZO), and therefore not all Polish Zionists voted in the ZO Congress elections. Unfortunately, neither I nor the archivists of the archive that houses the NZO files were able to find local-level data on the number of NZO members in Poland. A typical ZO elections protocol is depicted in Figure 2.

Ghettos were not established in all the localities that voted in the ZO elections, and there are places for which I only have the 1937 or the 1939 elections results. However, in places for which I do have both the 1937 and 1939 data, the local-level results are almost identical. In places for which both 1937 and 1939 data are available, I use averages. Several protocols remain unidentified—the names of the localities and the results are handwritten (almost exclusively in Hebrew, a handful in Yiddish or Polish), and the name of the locality is most of the time given in its Yiddish form, which is often quite different from the Polish original. As a partial solution to this problem, when the handwritten locality name was impossible to decipher, I tried to identify the locality by looking for names of the local electoral commission members at the Yad Vashem Central Database of Shoah [Holocaust] Victims' Names. Figure 3 displays one such protocol as well as the Yad Vashem registry on the electoral commission member who perished during the Holocaust. I was able to identify ZO elections results for 469 out of 667 ghetto localities. Of the 198 ghettos for which I do not have the ZO elections data, about fifty are from Western Galicia, for which no protocols are available-most likely they were kept in Poland and were destroyed during the war. Outside Western Galicia, many localities for which I do not have protocols are

very small towns, and hence it is likely that the elections were simply not held there. Otherwise, I do not observe any additional, systematic pattern that can explain the missing data. The ZO local election results were never previously analyzed by scholars.

Three main parties took part in the ZO Congresses elections in 1937 and 1939: the moderate General Zionists A, the religious *Mizrahi*, and the left-wing Bloc for the Working Land of Israel (BWLI). There were also two minuscule parties, General Zionists B and the right-wing Jewish State Party, which received only a handful of votes and therefore were excluded from analysis. In 1939, two more parties took part in the elections (though they did not compete in Eastern Galicia) but received very few votes and were omitted as well.

Analysis

In this analysis I match the data on ghettos with electoral returns from places in which ghettos were established. The dependent dichotomous variable is *Ghetto uprising*, and I include in the model a number of explanatory and control variables, described in Table 2.

Table 2 Here

To interpret the results I estimate the percentage change in odds. In other words, I estimate by how many percentage points the likelihood of uprising changes with a one unit or one standard deviation increase of a right-hand variable.² It should be noted that in this paper I focus on why and where the uprisings took place and do not analyze their timing. The reason is that there is no variation in the timing of uprisings—they were virtually always a last resort and took place during the final liquidation of the ghetto, real or perceived. The Jews had little to no impact on the timing of liquidation as the decision depended on German internal policies, goals,

² I use the post-estimation commands developed by Long and Freese (2006).

and holidays, such as Hitler's birthday. Therefore, after a decision to fight had been adopted, the exact date of the uprising was a function of German, not Jewish, actions. The results are reported in Table 3.

Table 3 Here

The results of the statistical tests support my theory's observable implication. A one unit increase in the logged number of ZO members in a community is associated with more than a fivefold increase in the probability of uprising; the estimated effect of location in Eastern Poland is associated with a 340% increase. The estimated effects of voting for the BNM and, interestingly, the communists are small but statistically significant and positive. Although the data are scant, it is possible that, like in the case of Białystok, the Jewish communists did join the Zionist-led underground in the uprising. It is also interesting to note that ghetto population and the percentage of Jews in the local community prior to the Holocaust are not statistically significant. As noted above, several studies of ethnically motivated violence put forward the concentration of groups and the "power in numbers" argument as an important explanatory variable. An opposite perspective that builds on the Olsonian logic of collective action argues that the organization of violence is easier in smaller groups. An analysis of slave revolts on ships travelling the Middle Passage has found that revolts were more likely on smaller ships (Marcum and Skarbek 2014). My analysis suggests that variables, other than sheer numbers and demographic structures explain the ghetto revolts. The enclosure of a ghetto by a fence or a wall-a good measure of the level of German oppression during the ghetto's existence and an impediment to acquisition of purely material resources and weapons, also has no statistically significant estimated effect.

It should be remembered, however, that the statistical analysis, while supporting the arguments derived from the theory and the small-N qualitative comparison, offers a strong plausibility test only. Because of the data limitations, I do not test the theory directly as there are no explicit measures of the "resister's toolkit" in the model. In ghettos where there people most likely to have the resister's toolkit, uprisings were more likely. Hopefully, further analysis of other repressive campaigns and resistance groups will offer a more direct way to test my arguments.

Table 2: Variables

Variable	Description
Percent Jews	Percent of Jews in the locality
Ghetto Population	Ghetto population (log)
Existence	Duration of ghetto existence (months)
Enclosed	Closed or open ghetto (dummy)
Eastern Poland	Under Soviet occupation in 1939-41 (dummy)
Percent BBWR	Percent of votes received by BBWR in the locality
Percent Communist	Percent of votes received by the communists and their allies in the locality
Percent Bund	Percent of votes received by Bund in the locality
Percent BNM	Percent of votes received by the Minorities Bloc in the locality
Percent Aguda	Percent of votes received by the General Jewish National Bloc in the locality
Percent Poalei Tsion	Percent of votes received by the Poalei Tsion in the locality
Percent Galicia	Percent of votes received by the Jewish National Union of
Zionists	Little Poland in the locality
ZO Members	Number of ZO Members in the locality (logged)
BWLI	Number of BWLI supporters in the locality (logged)
Gen Zionists	Number of General Zionists supporters in the locality (logged)
Mizrahi	Number of Mizrahi supporters in the locality (logged)

Variable	Increase Of		Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval		
	One Unit	One SD	(p value)			
ZO Members**	540.3	872.2	6.403 (.011)	1.533	26.736	
Eastern Poland*	344.2	-	4.442 (.059)	.947	20.842	
Percent BNM*	4.6	73.3	1.046 (.054)	.999	1.094	
Percent Communist***	5.8	87.0	1.058 (.001)	1.022	1.095	
BWLI Members	-15.9	-24.6	.841 (.474)	.523	1.351	
Gen Zionists	-34.8	-49.3	.652 (.108)	.387	1.099	
Mizrahi	-13.7	-23.6	.863 (.465)	.581	1.282	
Ghetto Population	64.1	82.1	1.641 (.314)	.626	4.302	
Percent Jews	2.1	49.4	1.021 (.243)	.986	1.057	
Existence	-0.4	-3.7	.996 (.914)	.921	1.077	
Enclosed	-6.1	-	.939 (.925)	.256	3.440	
Percent BBWR	2.2	36.8	1.022 (.261)	.984	1.063	
Percent Bund	0.9	3.4	1.009 (.910)	.863	1.181	
Percent Aguda	-0.4	-2.5	.996 (.953)	.885	1.122	
Percent Poalei Tsion	5.1	13.6	1.051 (.649)	.847	1.305	
Percent Galicia Zionists	1.1	16.8	1.011 (.684)	.958	1.067	
N = 339; Pseudo R2= 0.344; Log-Likelihood = -53.430						

Appendix Table 2: Logit Analysis of Ghetto Uprisings: Percentage Change in Odds

Notes: p values in parentheses (*p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01).

Figure 1. A Page From The 1928 Polish Elections Data Book

Tabl. 1.

WYBORY DO SEJMU WEDŁUG OKREGÓW WYBORCZYCH (c. d.).

ÉLECTIONS À LA DIÈTE SUIVANT LES CIRCONSCRIPTIONS ÉLECTORALES (suite).

OKRAG WYBORCZY NR. 4 (dok.) - CIRCONSCRIPTION ELECTORALE N-0 4 (fin). FOWIATY - ARRONDISSEMENTS: OSTRÓW, BIELSK, WYSOKIE MAZOWIECKIE.

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1.3-12



Figure 2. A Typical ZO Elections Protocol

Note: This is the protocol of the 20th Zionist Congress (1937) from the town of Bereza Kartuska (currently in Belarus). The town had 215 ZO Members. Of these, 177 cast their votes, and all votes were found valid. 31 people voted for General Zionists A; 2 for General Zionists B; 37 for Mizrahi; no votes were cast for the Jewish State Party; and the largest number of votes—107, was received by the BWLI.

Figure 3. A ZO Election Protocol and The Shoah Victims' Database Name of The Electoral Commission Chair





Click to enlarge

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The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names

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Full Record Details for Zelkowski Avraham

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Community Outreach Guide	Submitter's Last Name	ASSOCIATION		
About the Database	Submitter's Last Name	FILIPOV		
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Our Partners	may contain errors that shall be corrected in the			
The Stories Behind the	near future.			
Names	Back Print Help Basic Search Advanced Search			
Contact Us	Correct Our Deciphering			
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Note: This is the ZO 21st (1939) Congress Protocol from the small town of Filipów in Northeastern Poland. The town had only sixteen ZO members, of which fourteen voted on July 23, 1939. The chair of the local elections commission, Mr. Avraham Zelkowski (name is circled), perished during the Holocaust and the screenshot above displays the data available on Mr. Zelkowski in the Yad Vashem Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names.

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