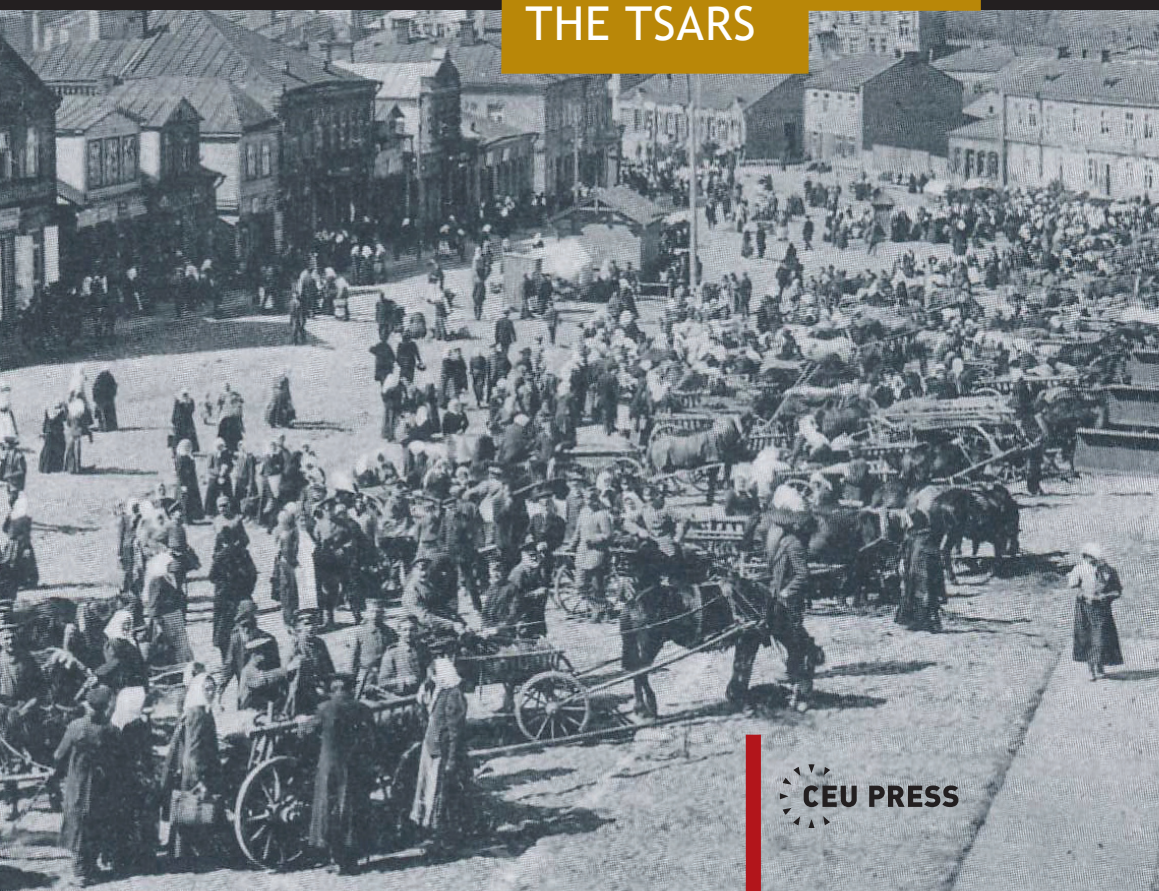


# ENEMIES for a DAY

Darius Staliūnas

ANTISEMITISM AND  
ANTI-JEWISH VIOLENCE IN  
LITHUANIA UNDER  
THE TSARS



## ENEMIES FOR A DAY

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# ENEMIES FOR A DAY

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## Antisemitism and Anti-Jewish Violence in Lithuania under the Tsars

DARIUS STALIŪNAS



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*To the memory of John D. Klier*



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## Preface and Acknowledgments

When there is a discussion revolving around Lithuanians, Jews, and violence, reference is made as a rule to the events of World War II, in which more than 90 percent of Lithuanian Jews were killed. This theme has already attracted the interest of researchers, including those in Lithuania in the last decade. What is lacking, however, is attention to the earlier, pre-Holocaust, history of the Lithuanian Jews. This book is about the nineteenth century, when Lithuania was part of the Russian Empire, and focuses on the relations between Christians and Jews. Although the questions that the book attempts to answer are related to the number of pogroms and their causes and circumstances, the analysis of anti-Jewish violence is actually important in a much broader context, as it reveals the relations between Christians and Jews, their images of each other, and various informal hierarchies. The topic of pogroms in the Romanov Empire has garnered considerable interest among scholars, mostly thanks to the recently deceased John D. Klier, to whose memory this book is dedicated. The researchers, however, have been primarily attracted by those regions of the Russian Empire where anti-Jewish violence reached a larger scale, and so less attention was given to the pogroms in Lithuania.

Although this project has been intensively developed over the last three to four years, the earliest text I wrote on this theme came out some ten years ago. From then until the submission of this manuscript in summer 2013, I have received support from a number of individuals and institutions. The most support, advice, and valuable observations came from my colleagues Vladimir Levin and Vilma Žaltauskaitė, who have helped me innumerable times. I also thank Eglė Bendikaitė, Mikhail Dolbilov, David Fishman, Il'ia Gerasimov, Guido Hausmann, Ēriks Jēkabsons, Lara Lempert, Lidija Levchenko, Veniamin Lukin, Dangiras Mačiulis, Zita Medišauskienė, Elmantas Meilus, Rimantas Miknys, Ol'ga Minkina, Vytautas J. Petronis, Stefan Rodhewald, Vladas Sirutavičius, Shaul Stampfer, Giedrius Subačius, Saulius Sužiedėlis, Žilvytis Šaknys, Jurgita Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė, Andrzej Tikhomirov, Paul W. Werth, and Gitana Zujienė for their assistance. This project

has been presented at seminars at various universities, and I am grateful to the colleagues who invited me to attend and to the participants of those seminars, in particular Amir Weiner of Stanford University, Mark von Hagen of Arizona State University, David Fishman of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Benjamin Schenk of the University of Basel, Martin Schulze-Wessel of the Ludwig Maximilian University Munich, Heinz-Dietrich Löwe of the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Alexander Semyonov of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences of St. Petersburg State University (Smolny College), Jan Kusber of Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Alexander Kamenskii of the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Felix Ackermann of the European Humanities University in Vilnius, François Guesnet of University College London, Yaroslav Grytsiak and Ostap Sereda of Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, Marina Mogil'ner of the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Scott Ury of Tel Aviv University. Papers related to this project were presented at academic conferences at the Lithuanian Institute of History, Södertörn University, University College London, the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. I owe thanks to the participants of these seminars and conferences for their comments and suggestions.

Parts of this book have previously been published in the following articles: "Dusetos, Easter 1905: The Story of One Pogrom," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 43, no. 4 (December 2012): 495–514; "Antisemitic Tension during the 1905 Revolution in Lithuania" *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 21: 54–88; "Lithuanian Antisemitism in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 25: *Jews in the Former Grand Duchy of Lithuania since 1772* (2013): 135–149; "How Insulted Religious Feelings Turned into Pogroms: Lithuania in 1900," *East European Jewish Affairs* 42, no. 2 (2013): 119–142; "Žydai ir kraujo vartojimas: vieno prietaro apraiškos XIX amžiaus Lietuvoje," *Lietuvos istorijos metraštis* 1 (2012): 51–80. I thank these publishers (including Taylor & Francis Ltd.) for permission to republish these materials. This research was funded by a grant (No. MIP-003/2012) from the Research Council of Lithuania. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the Lithuanian Institute of History, and YIVO.

## List of abbreviations

- AGAD – *Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych* [Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw]
- CAHJP – *Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem*
- GARF – *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii* [State Archive of the Russian Federation, Moscow]
- KAA – *Kauno apskrities archyvas* [Kaunas County Archives]
- LIIBR EA – *Lietuvos istorijos instituto Bibliotekos Rankraštyno Etnologijos archyvas* [Archive of Ethnology, Manuscript Division of the Library of the Lithuanian Institute of History]
- LMAVB RS – *Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių bibliotekos Rankraščių skyrius* [Manuscript Division of the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences]
- LNMMB RS – *Lietuvos nacionalinės Martyno Mažvydo bibliotekos Rankraščių skyrius* [Manuscript Division of the Lithuanian Martynas Mažvydas National Library]
- LTA – *Lietuvių tautosakos archyvas* [Lithuanian Folklore Archives]
- LVIA – *Lietuvos valstybės istorijos archyvas* [Lithuanian State Historical Archives]
- LVVA – *Latvijas Valsts vēstures arhīvs* [Latvian State Historical Archives]
- NIAB – *Natsional'nyi istoricheskii arkhiv Belarusi, Minsk* [National Historical Archives of Belarus, Minsk]
- RGIA – *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv, Sankt Peterburg* [Russian State Historical Archive, St. Petersburg]
- RGVIA – *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voenno-istoricheskii arkhiv* [Russian State Military History Archive, Moscow]
- RNB OR – *Rossiiskaia natsional'naia biblioteka, Otdel rukopisei, St. Peterburg* [Manuscript Division of the Russian National Library, St. Petersburg]
- TsGIASP – *Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv Sankt Peterburga* [Central Historical Archive of St. Petersburg]

VUB RS – Vilniaus universiteto bibliotekos Rankraščių skyrius  
[Manuscript Department of the Vilnius University Library]  
YIVO – Yidisher visenshaftlikher institut, New York [Institute for  
Jewish Research]

*In archival references the following abbreviations are used:*

FOR RUSSIAN AND BELARUSIAN ARCHIVES

ch. – chast' [part]  
d. – delo [file]  
dp-oo – Departament Politsii – obshchii otel  
[Police Department, General Section]  
f. – fond [collection]  
g. – god [year]  
l. – list, listy [leaf, leaves]  
oo – obshchii otel [General Section]  
op. – opis' [inventory]  
otd. – otделение [section]  
t. – tom [volume]

FOR LITHUANIAN ARCHIVES

ap. – aprašas [inventory]  
b. – byla [file]  
bs – bendrasis skyrius [General Section]  
d. – dalis [part]  
f. – fondas [collection]  
l. – lapas, lapai [leaf, leaves]  
m. – metai [year]  
ps – politinis skyrius [Political Section]  
t. – tomas [volume]

FOR LATVIAN ARCHIVES

apr. apraksts [inventory]  
f. fonds [collection]  
l. lietas [file]  
lp. lapa [leaf]

FOR POLISH ARCHIVES

k. – karta [leaf]

FOR U.S. ARCHIVES

l. – leaf, leaves  
p. – page

## Introduction

Hershl Meyer, the son of a milkman who lived near the small Kovno (Kaunas) Province shtetl of Gargždai, close to the border with Prussia, remembers his father telling him of events there during the 1905 Revolution. At that time, his father lived with his family in the village of Vėžaičiai, not far from Gargždai.<sup>1</sup> Peasants visited his father and asked him what to do, because the local authorities had ordered them to arrange an anti-Jewish pogrom. First, they proposed to imitate a pogrom, so initially they suggested Jews bind their heads in scarves to look as if they were injured in a fight. Finally, it was decided to smash a few windows and place pillows with torn feathers at the scene.<sup>2</sup> Although it is unlikely that such an incident actually took place, this tale aptly illustrates Jewish–Christian relations in nineteenth-century Lithuania. Let us begin with some doubts over the authenticity of this incident.

Certain elements of the Vėžaičiai story are typical of the Jewish historical narrative that was widespread in Eastern Europe. A number of tales in the Eastern European Jewish tradition claim that peasants regarded Jews as more intelligent than them and that, when faced with a difficult situation, peasants would visit a rabbi or some other respected Jew for advice. Gentile sources also tell of such incidents, albeit less frequently. Moreover, after the first wave of anti-Jewish violence in the empire in 1881–1882, the “Jewish street,” and later, all groups opposed to the imperial government, became convinced that it was the authorities who organized pogroms. In the story mentioned above, which was written in Yiddish, the authorities are identified by the Russian term *nachalstvo*, and thus it was definitely not church authorities of any kind, but secular officials who are said to have encouraged the viol-

1 The Russian names of major towns of the imperial era (Vil’na, Kovno) are used in this book. On first reference, the current form is mentioned as well. For smaller towns, only the current form is used.

2 Meyer, “Tsu der geshikhte,” 35.

lence. Even more importantly, this story, which supposedly took place in Vėžaičiai, is almost identical to one episode in Sholem Aleichem's book *Tevye der milkhiker* (Tevye the Dairyman).<sup>3</sup>

Other circumstances also cast doubt on the authenticity of the story. It is plausible that Russian officials were able to encourage anti-Jewish pogroms in Lithuania. As this book will illustrate, there were indeed attempts to do just that in the early twentieth century. However, it is hard to credit the part of this story that says that the local peasants would wish to win favor with the local authorities and at least pretend to comply with instructions from above. In 1905 Lithuania was ablaze with national as well as social revolution. In many parts of Lithuania, peasants not only ignored official orders but drove the officials out and replaced them with their own elected contingents.<sup>4</sup>

Even so, this story does say something important about Jewish-Christian relations in nineteenth-century Lithuania. The tale that Hershl Meyer's father told him sounded credible to him, because the Christian-Jewish relations that he remembered would not have led to collective violence. However, as this book will show, one of the few cases of anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania was recorded at that time and in that area: in 1905, near Vėžaičiai, in Gargždai.

This book is devoted to the topic of pogroms in tsarist Lithuania. Sometimes it is claimed that there were no pogroms in Lithuania throughout the "long nineteenth century,"<sup>5</sup> and that any that did happen were inspired by Russian officials and policemen.<sup>6</sup> Admittedly, Jewish tradition does occasionally mention pogroms, and generally, Lithuanian-Jewish relations are depicted as far from idyllic.<sup>7</sup> The present research on collective anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania was promp-

3 Sholem Aleichem, *Tevye der milkhiker*, 150–153.

4 Tyla, *1905 metų revoliucija Lietuvos kaime*.

5 Meyer, "Tsu der geshikhte," 34–35.

6 Petkevičaitė-Bitė, *Krislai*, 685; Čepėnas, *Naujųjų laikų Lietuvos istorija*, 357; Truska, "Tautinis lietuvių atgimimas," 23; Truska, *Lietuviai ir žydai*, 41; Atamukas, *Lietuvos žydų kelias*, 105. Sometimes it is noted that "anti-Jewish pogroms were not common and cruel": Aleksandravičius and Kulakauskas, *Carų valdžioje*, 221.

7 D. Levin, *Trumpa žydų istorija Lietuvoje*, 38. It should be noted that there are many inaccuracies in this book, including the discussion of pogroms.

ted by the lack of studies of the matter,<sup>8</sup> the increasing amount of research into pogroms in the Russian Empire,<sup>9</sup> and recent interest among social scientists in collective violence, especially ethnic violence.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, this study will attempt to explain what factors encouraged interethnic tension, primarily the strengthening of anti-Jewish sentiments; how ethnic hatred turned into collective violence; what role the imperial authorities played in these events; how Jews reacted to the pogroms, and, no less important, how the situation in Lithuania compared with that in other Central and Eastern European regions. Although historians often complain that much has already been written about crisis situations such as pogroms, and few are interested in day-to-day Jewish–Gentile cohabitation,<sup>11</sup> it is my belief that an analysis of such exceptional situations, such as outbreaks of collective violence, may reveal much about everyday relations, mutual assessments, and informal hierarchy.

Since the main subject of this research is the views and actions not of Jewish society but of Christian society, primarily Lithuanians, the territory covered in this book is not the whole of Jewish *Lite*, which included more or less the territory of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but Lithuanian *Lietuva*, in this case the imperial provinces of Vil'na (Vilnius), Kovno, and Suvalki (Suwałki).<sup>12</sup> The southern parts of Suvalki Province and the eastern parts of Vil'na Province, includ-

8 A collection of articles published in 2005 (Sirutavičius and Staliūnas, *Kai ksenofobija virsta prievarta*) may be regarded as the first serious academic study of the topic. A little earlier Nerijus Ūdrėnas briefly described some pogroms and gave a general characterization of Lithuanian–Jewish relations: Ūdrėnas, “Book, Bread, Cross, and Whip,” 349–360. Klaus Richter’s book (*Antisemitismus in Litauen. Juden, Christen und die ‘Emanzipation’ der Bauern (1889–1914)*. Berlin: Metropol 2013.) appeared when this manuscript was already submitted to publisher.

9 Klier and Lambroza, *Pogroms*; Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*.

10 Bergmann, “Pogroms,” 351; Bergmann, “Ethnic Riots,” 487; Bergmann, Hofmann, and Smith, “Introduction,” 11.

11 Galas, “Inter-Religious Contacts in the Shtetl,” 43; Avrutin, “Jewish Neighbourly Relations,” 2.

12 In 1843 Kovno Province was created from the northwestern districts of Vil'na Province, while in 1867 Suvalki Province was created from the northern part of Augustov (Augustów) Province. According to statistics on ethnicity from the mid-nineteenth century, Lithuanians formed a majority (51.4 percent) of Vilnius Province: “Classification of Population according to Ethnicity.”



ing Vil'na, where Lithuanians were in a clear minority (according to the 1897 General Census of the Russian Empire, only 2.1 percent of the population of Vil'na was ethnically Lithuanian), fall within this understanding of Lithuania. This research cannot be strictly limited along ethno-linguistic lines. First, it is often difficult to determine the ethnicity of those who took part in pogroms. Second, Lithuanian national identity was only just beginning to form in the nineteenth century; people were often faced with a choice as to which modern national identity they should adopt (in some cases members of the same family chose different national identities), and rapid processes of assimilation and acculturation were taking place. Third, important centers such as Vil'na must be included in the research, because any incidents in the "provincial capital," including pogroms, as the situation in other provinces of the empire shows, affected the region as a whole (in 1881–1882, pogroms in the cities of the southern parts of the empire would often spread into smaller towns and villages<sup>13</sup>). Fourth, this book asserts that anti-Jewish violence was motivated not only by nationalism but also by other factors. Here I shall attempt to show that the confessional allegiance of most of the population was a very important factor and that Vil'na and Kovno Provinces were exceptions in this respect in what was called the Northwestern Region.<sup>14</sup> Only in these provinces did Catholics comprise more than half of the population, while Russian Orthodoxy prevailed in the rest, and Catholics dominated in Suvalki Province (part of the Kingdom of Poland).<sup>15</sup>

Answers to the question of whether there were pogroms in Lithuania, and if so, how many there were, depend greatly on what expressions of collective violence are defined as pogroms. This study relies on the definition supplied by the German sociologist Werner Bergmann that a pogrom is "a one-sided and non-governmental form of social control, as 'self-help by a group' that occurs when no remedy from the state against the threat which another ethnic group poses can be expected. The pogrom is different from other forms of control, such as lynching, terrorism, and vigilantism, in that the participants in a pogrom hold the entire out-group responsible and therefore act against

13 Aronson, "The Anti-Jewish Pogroms," 47; Klier, "Christians and Jews," 166.

14 The Northwestern Region included the provinces of Vil'na, Kovno, Grodno (Grodna), Minsk, Vitebsk (Vitsebsk), and Mogilev (Mahilioŭ).

15 The 1897 census is presented in Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State*, 82, 85.

the group as a whole, and also in that it usually displays a low degree of organisation.”<sup>16</sup> This definition allows us to discern common features between expressions of violence that initially appear different, such as the 1881–1882 and 1903–1906 pogroms in the Russian Empire. While the former were directed mostly against Jewish property, the anti-Jewish violence at the beginning of the twentieth century, according to some historians, already showed features of genocide<sup>17</sup> and evinces what Donald Horowitz has called “deadly ethnic riots.”<sup>18</sup> We believe that Bergmann’s stress on the feeling of being left to one’s fate also fits examples of violence against Jews in Lithuania; in other words, in Lithuania pogroms often erupted when a portion of Christian society felt it had been hurt by Jews in some way and that the authorities would do nothing about it. Furthermore, we believe, like Bergmann, that violence committed by the authorities belongs to quite a different category. Finally, this definition distinguishes between a pogrom as violence against a whole group and other expressions of violence. We shall supplement Bergmann’s definition by adding dimensions of time, scope, and space in order to distinguish between small domestic conflicts and pogroms. Although historians have stressed on several occasions that pogroms were not an everyday phenomenon, smaller domestic conflicts between Jews and Christians often turned into violence in Lithuania, as in neighboring lands, between young people, especially on market days.<sup>19</sup> For this reason there must be a clear distinction between everyday conflicts and extraordinary phenomena. In

16 Bergmann, “Ethnic Riots,” 488.

17 Dekel-Chen, Gaunt, Meir, and Bartal, “Introduction,” 5. In Galicia too (especially Western Galicia, where Poles dominated), Jewish property, rather than people, was the target of most of the 408 pogroms in 1898; Struve, “Gentry, Jews, and Peasants,” 103–126; Stauter-Halsted, “Jews as Middleman Minorities,” 39–59; Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, vol. 2, 132–134.

18 D. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*.

19 Zborowski and Herzog, *Life Is with People*, 344; Sliozberg, “Dela minuvshikh dnei,” 259; *Odesskii pogrom i samooborona*, 69; Eliach, *There Once Was a World*, 324. The liberal Lithuanian newspaper *Ūkininkas* (Farmer) described one such case in 1906: “In Virbalis the town boys beat Jews severely for the gifts that were handed out for climbing poles. In the market square in Vilkaviškis, Christian children fought with little Jews over the swing, and when their parents defended their children, blood flowed”: J. Paš. [Br. Prapuolenis], “Iš Suvalkų gub. (Vilkaviškio pavieto) [From Suvalki Province (Vilkaviškis District)],” *Ūkininkas* 11 (1896): 87.

this study, pogroms will be defined as acts of violence against another group that last for at least a few hours (although time spans are difficult to determine unless they are specified in historical sources), with at least a few dozen participants, where violence takes place in a place of mass congregation (such as on a market square) or spreads within a certain inhabited area.

The term *pogrom* itself, as we know, came to be used after the wave of anti-Jewish violence that engulfed southern Russia in 1881–1882 to refer to anti-Jewish violence. Granted, the term was also applied during the final years of the Romanov Empire to other cases of inter-group violence.<sup>20</sup>

Although researchers analyzing specific cases of anti-Jewish violence may give different explanations of why collective violence erupted, the most common reasons sociologists and historians give for pogroms can still be determined.

For violence to be directed against a whole outgroup, clear boundaries must exist between the group that feels injured and the group that they want to punish. Roberta Senechal de la Roche asserts that the greater the *social polarization* between groups (fewer connections between groups, weaker functional allegiance, and greater cultural distance and inequality), the higher the likelihood of collective violence.<sup>21</sup> However, social polarization between Jews and Christians always existed, so this factor may explain to a certain degree why Jews as a group fell victim to collective violence, but it does not really explain why violence took place when it did. Collective violence, especially instigated by students and burghers against Jews, had taken place in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, for example in Vil'na, but as far as we can tell from existing historical studies, such violence was not common or intense.<sup>22</sup> Social scientists stress even more strongly that it is the removal of segregation that provokes ethnic violence.<sup>23</sup>

20 See Chapter Six.

21 Senechal de la Roche, "Collective Violence as Social Control," 97–128, esp. 106.

22 Bershadskii, "Istoriia Vilenskoi evreiskoi obshchiny," 145–149; Cohen, *Vilna*, 25–26, 34, 45, 49–53, 79–80; Meilus, "The History of Vilnius Old Jewish Cemetery," 69–70; Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė, *Žydai Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės visuomenėje*, 224. The issue of anti-Jewish violence in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania has never been systematically studied, so perhaps not enough is known about these incidents.

23 Olzak, *The Dynamics*.

One of the most commonly cited reasons for pogroms is *modernization*—social, economic, and political alike. The reasoning goes more or less as follows: as long as ethnic distribution of labor existed and Jews carried out certain intermediary functions, there was little ground for conflict involving the broader masses of the population. Economic and social modernization altered the status quo, including mechanisms for regulating disputes. The ethnic distribution of labor disappeared, and thus fewer and fewer Jews were able to make a living from their traditional occupations (for example, the arrival of mechanized means of production drove small craftsmen out of the labor market). These Jews had to find other ways to make a living. At the same time, some members of the Christian community attempted to carve out a place for themselves in traditional Jewish occupational niches (for example, peasants who had amassed wealth set up shops and loan institutions). Developing manufacturing industry required a workforce, and thus a new space appeared where Jews and Gentiles could compete. This fueled inter-communal competition, which was sharpest in times of economic crisis. Scholars often explain the pogroms in southern Russia in 1881–1882 in this way.<sup>24</sup> Contemporaries of the events analyzed in this study draw attention to this aspect of the issue:

No economic hatred could exist between peasants and the shtetl Jews, although of course there is economic friction. Economic hatred arises between workers and hirelings, or between competitors, but not between shopkeepers and customers, craftsmen and their clients. Peasants have not read the second volume of Marx's *Das Kapital* and do not know that commercial labor is unproductive labor; but they do know full well that he who lives by the sweat of his brow has a right to eat bread... Sometimes, of course, relations between Jews and goyim are those of a factory owner and his workers, an estate manager and his peasants, but these relations are not typical and pogroms do not catch the estate manager or factory owner unawares, the Christian small shopkeeper feels economic hatred towards the Jewish small shopkeeper: this is savage hostility fed by economic enmity that mat-

24 See Chapter Three.

ures into the completely wicked fruits of Antisemitism. A shopkeeper who wishes to destroy his rival becomes a provocateur, while the peasantry provides a fertile field for provocation.<sup>25</sup>

Rapid industrialization is one of the component parts of this modernization process. In the nineteenth century, the population of many towns within the Pale of Settlement and the Kingdom of Poland multiplied.<sup>26</sup> Completely different groups of people mixed in the towns, and this alienation (social polarization) also increased opportunities for collective violence. Moreover, it mattered considerably whether the conflict took place in a small settlement or a big city: the larger the town, the more even the slightest conflict could have painful consequences.

Political modernization, primarily Jewish emancipation, was also a factor generating antipathy towards Jews.<sup>27</sup> Some in the Christian community found it difficult to accept the idea that Jews were obtaining equal rights. In other words, though Jews should already have been treated as equals, some Christians continued to regard them as pariahs.<sup>28</sup> Thus, as Stefan Rohrbacher asserts, the main cause of the Hep-Hep riots in the German lands in 1819 was some Christians' dissatisfaction with Jewish emancipation.<sup>29</sup> In the Russian Empire, Jewish emancipation did not happen. However, actual equality between Jews and Gentiles was not as important as the imagination of certain Christians, especially strong during the 1905 Russian Revolution, that Jews would not only obtain equal rights but also seize power and impose their own order.

25 *Odesskii pogrom i samooborona*, 67–68. The term “Antisemitism” (“antisemitic”) is used in this book and not “Anti-Semitism” (“anti-semitic”) because a hyphenated form could suggest that “Semitism”, “Semitic” are meaningful terms.

26 For more on this, see Chapter Six.

27 “[...] After all, in the nineteenth century, in all the countries of Europe, the pace at which Jews were integrated into political frameworks through emancipation or actively participated in the economic and social systems was directly linked to the rise of manifestations of hatred towards them”: Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe*, 135.

28 Katz, “Anti-Semitism,” 49.

29 Rohrbacher, *Gewalt im Biedermeier*; Rohrbacher, “The ‘Hep Hep’ Riots,” 23–42.

Another often-cited cause of both pogroms and ethnic violence as a whole is *political crisis*.<sup>30</sup> In such cases there often remain no institutions capable of maintaining order, and this allows various social groups (including those on the margins) to implement their own version of justice. Such political crises afflicted the Russian Empire after the assassination of Alexander II in 1881 and during the 1905 Revolution. Löwe has calculated that more than 95 percent of pogroms in the Russian Empire took place during four years, namely 1881, 1882, 1905, and 1906, which were also years of political crisis.<sup>31</sup>

Mobilization of the masses is also associated with political modernization. Some researchers believe that the likelihood of collective anti-Jewish violence increases greatly when the masses are already mobilized even for unrelated causes. Lithuanian historian Sirutavičius asserts that the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence in Vil'na Province in 1908 can be explained by the fact that it took place in an area where "peasants had taken quite an active part in the 1905 Revolution. Revolutionary events (and the memory of them) encourage peasant political and social activity while breaking down the old established balance between ethnic groups. Having once been mobilized for one cause, they could direct their actions against another enemy, such as the Jews, when new circumstances developed."<sup>32</sup>

The *role of the authorities* is important in this context, too. The inability of imperial Russian institutions to halt the outbreak of pogroms, the weak penalties imposed on those involved, and especially the discriminatory policies towards the Jews encouraged the belief that the authorities organized pogroms themselves to punish a disloyal minority and direct increasing popular discontent away from themselves and onto the Jews, who became scapegoats. These interpretations, influenced by the Russian Jewish historian Simon Dubnow, were rejected only a few decades ago.<sup>33</sup> Nowadays most researchers agree that the Russian imperial authorities did not organize pogroms and that mass violence against Jews in 1881–1882 caught them unaware. At the same time, it is noted that the situations in 1881–1882 and 1903–1906 differ.<sup>34</sup> There were many cases during the second wave of pog-

30 Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence*, 5; Bergmann, "Ethnic Riots," 487.

31 Löwe, "Antisemitism in Russia," 177.

32 Sirutavičius, "Kai prietariai tampa prievarta," 117.

33 Aronson, *Troubled Waters*; Rogger, "Conclusion and Overview," 315–316.

34 Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, 148–156.

roms when imperial officials of various ranks whipped up or at least tolerated anti-Jewish violence. Gerasimov even asserts that “a strong revisionist agenda returns us to the seemingly obsolete interpretation of the early twentieth century: urban riots turn into Jewish pogroms only when and where the authorities allowed (or even encouraged) this development.”<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, although the imperial authorities did not organize pogroms directly, they created a favorable climate for pogroms to develop indirectly by blatant anti-Jewish discrimination and, if not by the encouragement of Antisemitism, at least by their toleration of it.

Yet another important tendency noted by historians, which admittedly is associated with the nature rather than the cause of pogroms, is that anti-Jewish violence gradually took on ever more cruel forms. As Löwe wrote, “the pogroms turned bloodier over time.”<sup>36</sup> The increase in brutality was obvious to contemporaries, too. Thus, immediately after the 1906 Belostok (Białystok) pogrom, the Yiddish newspaper *Der nayer veg* (The New Road) stated that the pogroms of the early 1880s were just “child’s play” compared with those of the 1905 Revolution.<sup>37</sup>

Alongside these structural causes, specific incidents usually became reasons why a pogrom might erupt when a dominant group regarded the matter as an injury committed by Jews. Such incidents might be the disappearance of a child, the blood libel, or the defacement of official symbols, such as a portrait of the tsar.<sup>38</sup> This sense of injury was particularly dangerous when the dominant group imagined it to be part of a broader and longer-term threat posed by the out-group. It would be logical to suppose that structural causes would receive more attention when many pogroms happened (as in 1881, 1882, 1905, and 1906). Meanwhile, for isolated cases of anti-Jewish violence, microanalysis should be equally or perhaps even more important. Thus a study of the causes of pogroms would ideally combine an approach that looked for structural changes leading to increased anti-Jewish sentiments in the broader region and the development of physical violence with a mic-

35 Gerasimov, review of *Anti-Jewish Violence*, 410.

36 Löwe, “Antisemitism in Russia,” 177.

37 “Der pogrom in Bialostok” [The Pogrom in Białystok], *Der nayer veg* 7 (1906): 260.

38 Bergmann et al., “Introduction,” 2002, 13–15; Bergmann, “Pogroms,” 362.

roanalysis that concentrated on specific circumstances prevalent on the eve of an attack and Christian–Jewish relations in a specific place and time.

How can we prove that certain specific causes lie behind a pogrom? One way to do this is to analyze the composition of mobs. If it transpires that many of the perpetrators were followers of a particular political movement—for example, if they were members of right-wing antisemitic organizations—it is likely that political or ideological circumstances played an important role in the attacks. This proposition is based on the belief that the mob acted rationally and that collective violence was a means to achieve specific ends. However, it has been noted more than once that marginal social groups often took part in pogroms and that they had no aims other than to carry out a pogrom.<sup>39</sup> To put it simply, violence or robbery was their aim, and those who were most vulnerable became their victims.

Recently historians have become increasingly influenced by the use of the cultural turn when studying various expressions of collective violence.<sup>40</sup> These studies allege that ethnic violence is “meaningful, culturally constructed, discursively mediated, symbolically saturated and ritually regulated.”<sup>41</sup> To put it simply, such studies claim that ethnic violence should be interpreted as a certain ritual. This means that mob actions, especially symbolic gestures, can be analyzed to decipher the “message” they were sending to the Jews and others in society. Such a deciphering is usually possible when a broad base of sources is available. Clearly, such analysis needs to be cautious. For example, the ransacking of a synagogue or the desecration of Jewish religious books may indicate a religious reason for the collective violence. But another, equally worthy, interpretation holds that the ransacking of synagogues or the destruction of Torah scrolls did not have any specific implicit purpose and that they were attacked simply because they belonged to Jews and represented them symbolically. Some researchers who apply this method assert that such a cultural approach is more fruitful than a search for the causes of a pogrom and even beli-

39 Brass, “Introduction,” 16.

40 Some examples of this approach might be mentioned here: Goldberg, “Rites and Riots,” 35–56; Hagen, “The Moral Economy,” 124–147; Bergmann, “Pogroms,” 360–361; Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881–1882*.

41 Brubaker and Laitin, “Ethnic and Nationalist Violence,” 441.



even that seeking such causes is by itself epistemologically fruitless. However, we would assert that this method is important primarily because it helps explain what factors gave rise to collective violence.

Another question that must inevitably be addressed when analyzing collective violence is how hatred turns into collective violence. How did it happen that more or less normal neighborly relations transformed into collective violence? What is important here is both mechanisms of social psychology and instruments of communication that allow the masses to become mobilized.

One possible reason for the outbreak of collective violence has been given by Roger Petersen, who claims that real or imagined threats to one of the basic human values (safety, wealth, and status or self-esteem) lead to ethnic violence. This concept of threat evokes associated emotions (fear, hatred, and/or resentment). These emotions become both a mobilizing factor and a factor coordinating certain actions and may even take the place of leadership.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, the choice of instruments of communication varies. In certain cases the press became such a tool for mobilizing the masses. The role of the publisher of the newspaper *Bessarabets*, Pavel Krushevan, in the outbreak of the Kishinev (Chişinău) pogrom at Easter 1903 is well known,<sup>43</sup> and in the early 1880s the press also contributed to anti-Jewish violence.<sup>44</sup> No less important an instrument for mobilizing the masses, especially in an age when most people were illiterate, was rumor, which is understood as being “a short-lived, unverified report, usually anonymous in its origin.”<sup>45</sup> A rumor is not necessarily false; sometimes it might be very accurate. As scholars have pointed out, rumors are, as a rule, difficult to track, especially those from long ago: it is never clear where they originate, what their sources are, how far they circulate or, most importantly, whose actual views they reflect. Historians also usually do not have a simple answer as to whether rumors are deliberately triggered or originate spontaneously. At the same time, one can very often reveal the functions that rumors had.<sup>46</sup>

42 Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence*.

43 Judge, *Easter in Kishinev*, 30.

44 Klier writes about the reaction of the Russian press to pogroms in the southern reaches of the empire: Klier, “The Russian Press,” 199–221.

45 D. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 74.

46 For more on this issue, see Narskii et al., *Slukhi v Rossii*.

The aim of rumors, like that of antisemitic press reports, was to mobilize the allegedly injured party, and so they usually described the injury the out-group was alleged to have committed. The tale would grow and become more and more terrible as it was passed on, and this would encourage violence. Even if someone spread rumors deliberately, the rumors would not spread further unless there was fertile ground for them in society. Another means for encouraging a potential mob was through flyers and other distributed texts, which—like press reports and rumors—also fulfilled a mobilizing function. At the same time, all these means could serve to terrorize an out-group.

We learn most about collective violence against Jews from accounts given by those involved in such incidents. These participants can be divided conditionally into three groups: those who committed violence, the authorities, and Jews who either experienced violence or thought there was a danger of violence. It would be easy if we could completely trust in the information presented by each of these groups: the evidence of the attackers or their advocates in the broad sense as presented to interrogators or the press; official data presented by officials in their reports to their superiors; or the accounts in the Jewish press, evidence given by Jews to investigators, or appeals and complaints addressed to the authorities. Unfortunately, each of these sources has its own defects. Attackers rarely admitted participating in violence, and if they did, they often blamed other people for their actions or even the Jews themselves. In general, ordinary people's motivations seem to be more reliably explained by their actions than by their writings or by others who acted in their name. Meanwhile, the interpretations offered in the press depended most often on the press's ideological stance. Likewise, we must also view Jewish sources critically, because as time went on, Jews tended more and more to blame the authorities for the pogroms, and Jewish advocates had their own political agenda. The possibility must be kept in mind that, in order to elicit official protection, their complaints might exaggerate the danger Jews faced or the losses they incurred. It is unrealistic to assume that officials always objectively assessed their own and other colleagues' actions in response to anti-Jewish violence, especially in the early twentieth century, when antisemitic sentiment grew stronger in official quarters. Klier has drawn attention to this point. In his opinion, a particular pogrom paradigm had formed in the late imperial period. That is, a certain interpretation of events was common: "Many

of the most important contemporary accounts and explanations of pogroms were based on *a priori* assumptions, engendered by events in 1859 or 1871, rather than 1881. Modern historians of the pogroms must be cognizant of this pre-existing frame of reference when judging the testimony of contemporaries.”<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, Russian officials might have described Christian–Jewish conflicts or pogroms in ethnic Lithuania more objectively than in ethnically eastern Slavic lands, because both Catholics and Jews were alien to them and often formed opposition groups that the authorities felt did not deserve protection. Thus all sources here (primarily the press, and material collected by imperial officials and various Jewish organizations) will be treated with an equal dose of criticism.

The book opens with two chapters analyzing the spread and intensity of anti-Jewish sentiment in Christian Lithuanian society. First the book discusses the blood libel leveled at Jews in the nineteenth century. Blood libel requires a special focus, because during the long nineteenth century this superstition was the strongest part of Lithuanian Judeophobia. Several cases of blood libel (in 1900 and 1905) require more detailed analysis, and they will be discussed in later chapters. The second part will discuss the view of Jews prevalent in modern (mainly Lithuanian) nationalism. It is important not only to explain the components of the antisemitic picture but also to trace how the intensity of these sentiments changed. Further analysis will be organized chronologically. The third chapter analyzes the situation in Lithuania in the early 1880s, when the first wave of pogroms swept the southern regions of the empire. In that chapter the scale of anti-Jewish violence in the southern provinces of the empire is compared to that in Lithuania, and an attempt is made to explain why the intensity of violence in both places differed. The fourth part of the study will be devoted to the anti-Jewish violence that took place in northern Lithuania in 1900. Several pogroms afflicted northern Lithuania in a year when no significant outbreak of anti-Jewish violence was recorded in other regions of the empire. This occurrence suggests that the causes of these incidents should be sought in the area where the pogroms took place. On the other hand, the wealth of primary sources available for these events allows us to examine in considerable detail not only the immediate

47 Klier, “The Pogrom Paradigm,” 34.

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causes of the pogroms but also the nature of the violence. Chapter Five discusses the increase in interethnic tensions that arose at the beginning of the twentieth century, especially in 1905, and we shall assess the small pogroms which took place in Lithuania at that time. In both the early 1880s and the period of the 1905 Revolution, Lithuania was almost unaffected by a wave of pogroms, even though the level of social mobilization there was no less intense than in other regions within the Pale of Settlement. This chapter will also discuss the pogroms committed by Russian army units in 1915. Admittedly, in this case we shall not be interested so much in the anatomy of these pogroms. Military pogroms are quite another type of violence, which differs from the cases of collective violence studied here. In this case we are more interested in the behavior of local Christian society during the pogroms. The last part of the book takes a comparative perspective. Here, first of all, the situations in Lithuania and Belarus are compared. The Belarusian provinces (Grodno, Minsk, Vitebsk, and Mogilev) provide particularly good grounds for comparison, because in the early 1880s the situation in both regions was more or less identical but changed radically at the beginning of the twentieth century. Thus such a comparison should help us define the reasons for the small number of pogroms in Lithuania. Later, the book compares Lithuania with eastern Galicia in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, where historians have also noted a small number of pogroms. Such a comparison should help explain those situations where there were fewer conditions for anti-Jewish violence to erupt. The third object of comparison is physical clashes between Lithuanians and Poles that arose after conflicts in Catholic churches over the language of the supplementary services. This comparison should help explain how anti-Jewish violence differed from situations where other ethnic or confessional groups were victimized. The book ends with a presentation of its conclusions.



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## The Blood Libel in Nineteenth-Century Lithuania

At the turn of the twentieth century, modern nationalisms divided, or rather, began to divide society in Lithuania into competing and conflicting national groups. Nevertheless, society was not monolithic even before this period. In very simplified terms, the Christian part of society can be divided into an educated gentry and a less literate peasantry. Understandably, the views these groups held of Jews were not necessarily the same.

We can discover the views of educated society from literary works, memoirs, and epistolary evidence. The view of Jews in these sources during the first half of the nineteenth century is negative in almost every way. Jews were an alien group who did not wish to integrate into local society at all and differed from those around them in appearance, language, religion, customs, and behavior. In an agricultural society, which valued work on the land most highly, Jewish economic activity in trade or finance was invariably regarded with contempt. Gentry society was particularly irked by Jewish innkeepers, whom they accused of intoxicating peasants. Politically speaking, Jews were also seen as suspect, for, as the 1830–1831 Uprising showed, they did not support the gentry's attempts to re-establish the Commonwealth of the Two Nations and were inclined to support the stronger side—namely, the Russian authorities. More generally, the spread of amorality, crime, and other such activities was associated with Jews. Talmudic Judaism was regarded as the primary source of these “sins,” as it not only kept Jews apart from the rest of society but also allegedly encouraged them to despise Christians. Granted, by this point we no longer find accusations that Jews tormented Christians and used their blood for ritual purposes. Such charges were common in Polish-language literature from the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the first half of the nineteenth century. Although such events were described in various books from time to time, they were regarded as an outdated

superstition in which the public no longer believed.<sup>1</sup> No such sources are available to detail the outlook of peasants.

Peasant mentality, including peasants' view of Jews at that time, was influenced by the clergy and religious tradition, the manor house in the broad sense of the term, common law, and oral traditions. Jewish views of the peasants also presumably influenced attitudes towards Jews. No research has been done on this topic, so we must rely on isolated sources that give the impression that in *Lite*, Jews, like many other social groups, looked down on peasants and regarded them as uncivilized, crude, and illiterate. According to Mordechai Zalkin, Lithuanians "were perceived by many Jews as a primeval undeveloped primitive rural society."<sup>2</sup> During the late 1860s a commission meeting in Vil'na to draft projects for Jewish integration learned, based on descriptions given by some Jewish communities in Oshmiany (Ašmiany) and Novogrudok (Navahrudak), that Jews regarded the peasants as having been "unlettered for centuries"; they "had class prejudices" and were "semi-savages."<sup>3</sup> A reflection of this view can be found in an 1886 article in the Jewish periodical *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* concerning Virbalis peasants. They were apparently convinced that during Easter, a small Jew would be found in church whom no one would notice at first and who would grow to an indescribable height and kill all Catholics.<sup>4</sup> The telling of this and similar stories

1 Zita Medišauskienė has discussed in some detail the image of Jews in Lithuanian Polish-language literature during the first half of the nineteenth century: Medišauskienė, "Ottalkivaiushchii, no bez nego ne oboitis'," 93–114.

2 Zalkin, "Sharunas, Prince of Dainava," 149.

3 Appeal of Jews in the Oshmiany District (Vil'na Province) to the governor general of Vil'na, January 1868 (day not specified), appeal of Jews in the Novogrudok District (Minsk Province) to the governor general of Vil'na, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1867 m., b. 1478, l. 10, 16. For more on this commission, see Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics*, 143–144; Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question*, 172–181; Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 174–180; Dolbilov, "Russifying Bureaucracy," 130–131, 137–139; Staliūnas, "The Jewish Deputies," 8–23. Such a view "from above" can be seen in memoirs in the case of the maskil Ekhezkel Kotik, who complained that his wife did not wish to trade in Kamenets-Litovskii anymore, because "there are no landowners and she has no desire to sell goods to peasants. You have to deal simply with them, talk them into buying, but she is a proud woman, a real 'I'll show you' kind of person": Kotik, *Moi vospominaniia*, 247.

4 N.N. [?], "Verzhbolovo, 13-go apreliia," *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 16 (1886): 451.

shows that, for some Jews at least, peasants were completely uncivilized and ready to believe various superstitions.

In “Jewish sources” and historical writing, Catholic priests were regarded as the source of Lithuanian anti-Judaism and Antisemitism.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, until the first wave of pogroms in the Russian Empire, conflicts arose in Lithuania between Christians and Jews on more than religious grounds. During the Napoleonic invasion, Jews complained to the authorities, alleging that Poles wished to kill them and Russians for being loyal to the tsar. However, it is hard to assess the scale of any such Judeophobic hatred at the time.<sup>6</sup> On the eve of the 1863–1864 Uprising, Jews in certain parts of Lithuania received threats as a result of their sympathies for the imperial authorities.<sup>7</sup> Sometimes peasants complained that a Jew was hurting them,<sup>8</sup> but in such cases the complaint was directed at a particular Jew, and these conflicts did not turn into antipathy towards the whole community. Meanwhile, hatred arising from injured religious sentiment had greater potential as a mobilizing force.

The belief that Jews did not respect Christianity was strengthened on occasion by the behavior of certain Jews, especially young ones. The memoirs of Volf (Vevik) Rabinovitch, younger brother of Sholem Aleichem, born in a small Ukrainian village, reveal that in his early days, the great writer liked to lead a group of Jewish children who used to “attack” Christian symbols in their small town. They would toss stones or dirt into collection boxes. Sholem Aleichem also pretended

5 “Proishestvie v Shavlianakh,” *Severnaia pchela* 80 (1861); Azriel Shohat, “The Beginnings of Anti-Semitism,” 7.

6 File “Po slukham o namerenii Poliakov istrebit’ Evreev v Vilenskoi i Minskoi gub. i Belostokskoi oblasti,” *GARF*, f. 1165, op. 1, 1813 g., d. 6. Historians also sometimes write that accusations of Jews using Christian blood that appeared in the late 1810s derived from Polish revenge on Jews for their loyalty to the Russian Empire (Dudakov, “Voina 1812,” 309–317), but their arguments are not convincing.

7 File “Po doneseniiu Nachal’nika Kovenskoi gubernii ob opaseniakh evreev Utsianskogo, Dusiatskogo i Rakishskogo obshchestv,” *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1861 m., b. 117. Other sources mention rumors that at that time, Poles in the Western Region were preparing to kill Jews: Limanowski, *Pamiętniki*, 206; Raikovskii, “Pol’skaia molodezh’,” 599, 613. However, there is no available data to show that these rumors were very widespread.

8 File “Po prosheniiu krest’ian tel’shevskogo uezda Osipa Vasilevskogo i Lukasha o proizvodstve sledstviia (ob ugnetenii) o pritesnenii ikh evreem Aronom Londa (on zhe Adol’f Lindau),” *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 21369.



to pray before a statue of Our Lady.<sup>9</sup> There were similar examples in Lithuania. On Holy Saturday 1881 at Žiežmariai, a Jewish child threw a stone or stones at a Catholic procession going from the church to the cemetery outside the town. One source even writes that the stone was thrown at a crucifix carried at the head of the procession.<sup>10</sup> Such behavior by young Jews served to enforce Christian convictions that Jews did not respect their religion. Both communities found hostility increased when a Jew (more often than not, a woman) converted to Christianity. At such times the Jewish community might take collective action, including force, to bring the *meshumed* (convert) back into their ranks against the wishes of the Christians.<sup>11</sup>

Probably one of the Lithuanian politicians most positively inclined toward Jews, and who enjoyed some favor on the “Jewish street,” was Andrius Bulota. He summarized Lithuanian views of Jews in an interview at the beginning of the twentieth century:

I would not conceal from you that among Lithuanians, especially in the dark and little conscious strata of our peasantry, Antisemitism is sprouted with all its ulcers. But this is not the *political* Antisemitism that Mr. Purishkevich and Mr. Krushevan profess; it is also not similar to the diplomatic Antisemitism of Polish chauvinists. The roots of this hostility to Jews, which is seen among us, should be sought in the religious ground, in the medieval survivals [*perezhitki*]. The Lithuanian people, notwithstanding its revolutionary mood, remains deeply a religious people; and a good Catholic, who is in addition an ignorant man, naturally does not like Jews because they “crucified Christ.”<sup>12</sup>

9 Miron, *The Image of the Shtetl*, 2.

10 Files: CAHJP, HMF/764, HMF/664. At the end of the sixteenth century and during the seventeenth century, priests complained that Jews would throw stones at religious processions passing through Jewish areas: Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė, *Žydai Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės visuomenėje*, 247.

11 File “Po prosheniiu Evreia Gertsia Doviatskogo zhaluiushchegosia na ksendza Kumynina za pokhishcheniie 13i letniago syna ego Davida, s tsel’iu obrascheniia ego v Rimsko-katolicheskuiu veru,” LVIA, f. 378, bs, 1862 m., b. 193.

12 Quoted in V. Levin, “Lithuanians in the Jewish Politics,” 98.

There is no doubt that in the literature of the time under consideration, Jews were still regarded as collectively responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus.<sup>13</sup>

The blood libel was probably the most likely of all superstitions to cause interethnic relations to deteriorate further. Several manifestations of this appeared in Lithuanian society. First and foremost, the most widespread superstition about Jews was that they used Christian blood in their religious rites, as ethnographical material<sup>14</sup> and nineteenth-century written sources show: "Increasing growth in Christian hatred blamed the Jews for various misdemeanors; most commonly they were accused of the theft of Christian children, whom they would allegedly murder and then use their blood in matzot... This belief has become ingrained in the common people to such an extent that to this day in Vil'na Province, one comes across tales of the kidnapping of Christian children by Jews with similar descriptions of a barrel lined with nails, where they place the youth and shake him until he dies [...]"<sup>15</sup>

Other cases involved situations where Christians had specific suspicions of such Jewish malice.<sup>16</sup> Although Jews were undoubtedly accused of such crimes, it seems that many of the accounts Jews gave at the time dramatized and exaggerated the situation. Often the accounts say that the accusations against the Jews escalated almost immediately into pogroms but that at the last minute the police arrived or the child was found.

A third kind of story arose when a Christian, most often a child, disappeared and the victim's community or the authorities took mea-

13 Vareikis, "Antisemitizmas Lietuvoje," 27.

14 Anglickienė, "Judėjo įvaizdis," 45–47; Anglickienė, *Kitataučių įvaizdis*, 140–146; L'vov, "Krov' i matsa," 51–68; Mardosa, "Lietuvių ir žydų santykiai," 378; Mardosa, "Tautiniai santykiai," 100; Tikėjimų kartoteka, LTA, *LIIBR EA*, 1463/87–90, 92, 374d (2213).

15 Koreva, "Evrei," 39.

16 In Luokė (Kovno Province, 1888): Kagan, *Yidishe shtet*, 248. In Naujamiestis (Kovno Province, 1892): "Korrespondentsii," *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 17 (1892): 471–472. In Petrašiūnai, near Kovno (1893): Kh. V. [?], "Kovno, 31-go marta," *ibid.*, 15 (1893): 405–406. In Smorgon' (Vil'na Province, 1894): I. B. [?], "M. Smorgon' (Vil. gub.), 27-go marta," *ibid.*, 14 (1894): 384–385. In Ramygala (Kovno Province, 1908): "Z Belarusi i Litvy," *Nasha niva* 14 (1908). Other examples will be mentioned in the discussion of interethnic tension in the early 1880s, 1900, and the early twentieth century.

tures to find out what kind of crime was committed and to punish the alleged perpetrators. Such cases will come under special scrutiny here because they usually left a “broader trace.” In other words, there are more primary sources that allow us to reconstruct Christian views of this superstition.<sup>17</sup>

#### THE ORIGINS AND SPREAD OF THE BLOOD LIBEL IN EUROPE AND THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

The first known appearance of the accusation in ritual murder against Jews took place in Norwich (eastern England) in 1144, although such charges may have been made earlier in Spain.<sup>18</sup> The subject of ritual murder arose in thirteenth-century Germany, where it was supplemented by a blood motive. Thus during the Middle Ages, the belief began to spread in Western Europe that during Passover, Jews would torment a Christian child, usually a male, and use his blood to make matzot. Later the range of supposed uses of Christian blood grew: some people alleged that Jews required Christian blood for various magic rituals and for medical purposes.<sup>19</sup> Allegedly, when Christians re-enacted the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord, Jews also sought to commemorate this event, while lending it a more sinister interpretation. The child’s suffering was said to echo the suffering of Christ. At the same time, a closely related belief arose that Jews sought to desecrate the Host; that is, they would strike it until blood began to flow. Those researching the origins of the blood libel associate it with the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which put an end to twelfth-century debates on the nature of the Eucharist and stated that during the Sacrament of the Mass, bread and wine transubstantiate into the True Body and Blood of Christ.<sup>20</sup> One explanation holds that the blood-libel was created to strengthen this conciliar canon, for, it was alleged, even the Jews accepted that the Blood of Christ had miraculous pow-

17 For similar classification, see Żyndul, *Kłamstwo krwi*, 9. Three Lithuanian cases are discussed in this book: *ibid.*, 98–100, 107–108. Earlier some cases were discussed by Vladas Sirutavičius: Sirutavičius, “Kai prietarai tampa prievarta,” 99–116.

18 Schroubek, “Zur Tradierung und Diffusion,” 19.

19 Erb, “Zur Erforschung der europäischen Ritualmordbeschuldigungen,” 9.

20 Smith, *The Butcher’s Tale*, 95.

ers.<sup>21</sup> Another interpretation says that a particular psychological mechanism was at work in this case. It was fear, shame, and uncertainty, because in a certain sense an act of cannibalism forced people to seek protective psychological mechanisms: the apparent projective inversion mechanism, whereby Jews were blamed for what Christians did and were ashamed of doing.<sup>22</sup>

These accusations were very dangerous for Jews, because they were often connected with prosecution, interrogation, and torture, outbreaks of mass anti-Jewish violence, and expulsions. Such accusations against Jews were rare in Central and Eastern Europe before the sixteenth century. Accusations of blood libel and desecration of the host made against Jews in Lithuania and Poland can be found starting in the sixteenth century; they became particularly common during the Counter-Reformation. Between 1540 and 1790, there were between 80 and 100 recorded cases, some of which ended in formal trials. Meanwhile, in Western Europe the number of cases became rarer and rarer, just as they became more frequent in the Commonwealth. Such accusations began to decline in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, during the Enlightenment, when the routine use of torture during interrogations was abandoned.<sup>23</sup> If this tendency had continued, such accusations should have become increasingly rare during the nineteenth century. However, between 1881 and 1900, as many as 128 cases were recorded; historians note six prosecutions against Jews between 1879 and 1913 at Kutaisy (Georgia, Russian Empire, 1879), Tiszaeszlár (Hungary, 1882–1883), Xanten (German Empire, 1891–1892), Polna (Bohemia, Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1899–1900), Konitz (German Empire, 1900–1901), and Kiev (Ukraine, Russian Empire, 1911–1913).<sup>24</sup>

21 Kieval, "Blood Libels," 195.

22 Dundes, "The Ritual Murder," 336–376; Smith, *The Butcher's Tale*, 97.

23 Węgrzynek, "Czarna legenda"; Guldon and Wijaczka, "The Accusation of Ritual Murder," 99–140; Kieval, "Blood Libels," 195–200; Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė, *Žydai Lietuvos Didžiosios Kunigaikštystės visuomenėje*, 246–269; Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė, "Blood Libel," 201–209; Burba, "Ritualinės žmogžudystės?" 25–27.

24 Historians have described some of these cases in detail: Kieval, "Representation and Knowledge," 52–72; Kieval, "Blood Libels," 195–200; Smith, "Konitz," 93–122; Smith, *The Butcher's Tale*; Kieval, "Neighbors, Strangers, Readers," 61–79; Klier, "Cry Bloody Murder," 213–229.

The subject of ritual killings was not widespread in the Russian Empire before the end of the eighteenth century. However, at that time Russia had hardly any Jews.<sup>25</sup> Only after the incorporation of Polish and Lithuanian Jews from 1772 to 1795 were such accusations heard in Russia's Orthodox areas too.<sup>26</sup> In other words, when Russia annexed the Commonwealth of the Two Nations, it also took over "Polish" anti-Jewish superstitions.<sup>27</sup>

Although, as Konstantin Burmistrov asserts, the allegations against Jews that developed in imperial Russia did not have any Orthodox origins—that is, the whole subject was borrowed from the West<sup>28</sup>—the absence of intellectual motivation does not mean that the superstition was not widespread. Apart from the abovementioned cases from late imperial Russia, there were still several other cases in Russia in which Jews were accused of ritual murder: at Grodno in 1816,<sup>29</sup> Velizh (Vitebsk Province) in 1823,<sup>30</sup> and Saratov in 1860. There was no uniform view of this topic among the highest imperial authorities. Although one of the first members of the imperial political elite to deal with Jewish integration, Gavrila Derzhavin, did not blame all members of the Jewish community, he believed there were individual fanatics guilty of such murders whom the community protected.<sup>31</sup> Thanks to efforts by Jewish deputies, in the light of the Grodno case, in 1817 the imperial authorities outlawed accusations of ritual murder without specific proof.<sup>32</sup> Thus even though the authorities did not deny that ritual murders existed, they did make it more difficult, or so they

25 Historians mention only a few cases: Żyndul, *Kłamstwo krwi*, 88. Klier asserts that this superstition reached Russian Orthodox areas through the Uniate Church: Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question*, 418.

26 Żyndul writes that, starting in the middle of the century, such accusations were made against Jews in those parts of the empire that previously did not belong to the Commonwealth: Żyndul, *Kłamstwo krwi*, 101.

27 Panchenko, "K issledovaniiu," 82, 94.

28 Burmistrov, "Krovavyy navet," 31.

29 Sobolevskaia and Goncharov, *Evrei Grodnenshchiny*, 235–236.

30 For the most recent analysis of this case, see Avrutin, "The Ritual Murder," 309–326.

31 Klier, *Rossiiia sobiraet svoikh evreev*, 178. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the blood libel was directed against the Hasidim: Wodziński, "Krew i chasydzi," 199–212.

32 Gessen, *Velizhskaia drama*, 6–7; Minkina, 'Syny Rakhili,' 155–156; Żyndul, *Kłamstwo krwi*, 71.

hoped, for such charges to be brought. According to the Russian Jewish historian Iulii Gessen, who described the Velizh case in detail, although Nicholas I believed that Jews needed Christian blood for their rituals, he insisted that the case be proven.<sup>33</sup> Although an imperial resolution confirmed the verdict releasing the Jews blamed in the Velizh case, this also showed that Nicholas I believed that there were secret Jewish sects that used Christian blood in their rituals.<sup>34</sup> The subsequent instruction to the Department of Spiritual Affairs of the Foreign Confessions within the Interior Ministry concluded in 1844 with the (limited) printing of a study which, on the basis of various anti-Jewish literature, was devoted to that superstition.<sup>35</sup> The Saratov case created a new puzzle for the ruling elite, and a commission was established in St. Petersburg whose members were unable to agree on the blood-libel issue.<sup>36</sup> One member of the commission, a Jewish convert to Orthodoxy, Daniil Khvolson, who taught in the St. Petersburg Orthodox Seminary, soon issued a book denying this superstition. As will be shown later, this became a serious argument defending the empire's Jews from such continuing accusations.<sup>37</sup>

Thus Lithuania, primarily its officials, received quite ambiguous signals from the imperial center. Some imperial officials demonstrated a rational understanding of the absurdity of the superstition and the need to combat it. Yet, some members of the ruling dynasty, including Nicholas I, confirmed their belief in the superstition. The views of the imperial elite had a direct impact on certain cases where Jews in Lithuania were accused of ritual murder, which we shall discuss now.<sup>38</sup>

33 Gessen, *Velizhskaia drama*, 81; Żyndul, *Kłamstwo krwi*, 93.

34 Reznik, "Zachem zhe snova piatnat' V. I. Dalia?" 441.

35 Historians do not agree who authored this book. Traditionally, it was attributed to the famous linguist Vladimir Dal'. Some researchers still think that Dal' drafted at least part of the text, while others reject this idea: Panchenko, "Vladimir Dal' i krovavyi navet."

36 Official letter from the director of the Department of Spiritual Affairs of the Foreign Confessions within the Interior Ministry to governor of Kovno, May 28, 1865, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 8, d. 322, l. 8.

37 Khvolson, *Upotreblaiut-li evrei khristianskuiu krov'*? See also Schainker, "Imperial Hybrids," 295.

38 There were almost certainly more cases of blood libel in nineteenth-century Lithuania than are mentioned here. According to Ol'ga Minkina, wealthier Jews or Kahals who were accused of such things avoided court by "redeeming" themselves: Minkina, *'Syny Rakhili*,' 35–36.

The Disappearance of a Child in Shavli  
(Šiauliai) District, 1801

This story begins on March 17, 1801,<sup>39</sup> Palm Sunday, at the home of the Stelmokai village peasant Jan Luberski. The family's four-year-old son, Maciej, was visited by his godmother; the family decided to celebrate the occasion with alcohol. Luberski set off for the inn to buy vodka, and on the way he met up with a peasant who served in a Jewish household.<sup>40</sup> Luberski's son ran out after him, and no one admitted to having seen him after this. The parents only noticed that their son was missing when, while drinking vodka at home, the boy's godmother asked where Maciej was, so she could give him a drop of vodka too. A search for the boy proved unsuccessful. Several attempts were made to search the inn, but according to the peasants, the tenant, Khaim Shlomovich, would not let them in.<sup>41</sup> The Luberskis knew Shlomovich well, because the boy's mother often worked for him as a servant. The boy's body was found in the forest on March 28.

As early as March 17, the lower court and many peasants suspected that Jews were involved in the boy's disappearance. The superstition about Jewish use of Christian blood was strengthened by the fact that Shlomovich did not want to allow the peasants into the inn. Although there were no specific facts to connect Shlomovich with the boy's disappearance, and the medical evidence unambiguously ruled out a violent death, the locals were generally convinced that only Jews could have killed the child. Thus Shlomovich was arrested. According to the villagers, the child could not have gone into that part of the forest by himself; that day Jews had acted strangely (as we have noted, the peasants were not allowed into the inn); Shlomovich spent the night sleeping by the window, rather than in his bed; light burned for a long time in Shlomovich's room; and the Jews offered differing accounts of

39 Unless otherwise stated, all dates are given in the Old Style (according to the Julian calendar, which was used in the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century. The Julian calendar was twelve days behind the Gregorian calendar [thirteen days, starting from 1900] that was in use in the Kingdom of Poland at that time).

40 Because of the holy days, Jews were unable to do this work themselves; at such times, such functions were carried out by a hired Gentile, the *shabes goy*.

41 Jews in the Russian Empire were compelled to have surnames only as of 1804. Before then, most used only given names and patronymics: Beider, "Names and Naming," 1251.

events, claiming that the child should be sought in the forest, or that some Latvian had carried the boy off to Courland. Finally, the wounds on the boy's body allegedly proved he had died a violent death. Passions ran so high that peasants and Jews exchanged angry words.<sup>42</sup>

It is unclear how this story would have ended, had it not been for a complaint the Shavli Jewish Kahal sent to the governor of Vil'na, Ivan Frizel. The latter called anti-Jewish accusations "crude popular prejudice" (*gruby przesądek pospolstwa*) and ordered the case be brought before a higher court, the Shavli District Castle Court. This court interviewed the witnesses once more and they presented similar evidence, but the Jews were found not guilty. This verdict was approved by the Lithuanian Supreme Court.<sup>43</sup>

A STORY TOLD BY A GIRL IN THE TEL'SHI  
(TELŠIAI) DISTRICT IN 1814

Eva Rostakovska, a twelve-year-old shepherdess who disappeared for one night in the district of Tel'shi in 1814, told a story of how a few Jews caught her by the Pušiniai (Smiltynė) tavern and drove to another tavern, where they not only tortured her but also drained blood from her left arm. A strange peasant who came by the tavern allegedly saved the girl. An investigation initiated by the local officers showed that the master of the girl, landlord Anatolii Pliachovich, went to look for her with help the same evening and supposedly heard a scream in the forest, but the search was unsuccessful. After more than a year, two Jews, Shevel' Abramovich and Iosel' Mendeliovich, who were traveling by the same tavern on that day, were arrested as suspects. The appeals of the families of these arrested Jews to the Lithuanian governor general got the attention of the highest local authorities, and the suspects were set free. However, the investigation went on without result until at least 1823.<sup>44</sup>

42 Witness evidence, *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 1, b. 322, l. 17–18.

43 File "Po resheniiu Litovskago Glavnago Suda obvinennykh o ubiistve mal'chika Khaima Shlomovicha i Orelia Sundukovicha," *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 1, b. 322.

44 See file "O izmuchenii Rossienskago poveta Evreiami Shevelem Abramovichem i Ioselem Mendeliovichem Devochki Evy Rostakovskoi," *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1816 m., b. 70.



## EVENTS IN TEL'SHI DISTRICT, 1827

On the Friday after Easter, April 8, 1827,<sup>45</sup> a seven-year-old farm boy, Juozapas Petravičius, disappeared from Zdoniškė Manor in Tel'shi District.<sup>46</sup> A youth named Augustinas Žukovskis, who herded pigs with the boy, reported that two Jews had grabbed Petravičius and carried him off to the forest. The local landowner, Petras Dimša, gave immediate instructions to search for the boy, but that day's search was fruitless. No investigation was begun into the disappearance of the boy, and from available sources we might even get the impression that the local community forgot about the child until April 26, when his body was found beside a lake. At the beginning of the investigation, Žukovskis stood by his original account concerning the two Jews, and he even described them in detail, later recognizing one of them, Hirsh Katz, apparently from a police lineup. Soon other alleged evidence appeared that indirectly corroborated Žukovskis's version of events, and one girl, Karolina Kumzovna, alleged that Jews had chased her that day but that she managed to escape. Another claimed he had seen two Jews driving three horses and that one of them had apparently attempted to disguise himself; another peasant family, the Juciai, said that their son Jonas had disappeared earlier. The Jews' guilt was allegedly proved by their suspicious behavior: one had refused to allow animals to be herded near the storeroom, where rumor said the child was being hidden; another claimed that Petravičius had been kidnapped by his father, who had returned from Prussia, disguised as a Jew. They even found a Jewish child who had apparently heard talk of particular Jews who had been involved in the disappearance. One Jewish convict alleged that he had heard Katz saying that the Jews had bribed local policemen not to report the incident to their superiors.

The ritual-murder allegation was corroborated further by several converts from Judaism, who claimed that while they were "still Jews,"

45 Passover was on March 31 that year.

46 See files "O smerti 7-mi letnego mal'chika naidennogo mertvym na Zemle Pomeshchika Dymshi. – Petrovicha," *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1827 m., b. 826; "Ob ubiistve semiletneho Petrovicha Iosifa," *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 6, b. 1071, 1086, 1110; *CAHJP*, HMF/764, HMF/898; Żyndul, *Kłamstwo krwi*, 98–99. An infamous nineteenth-century antisemite, Ipolit Liutostanskii described this story (Liutostanskii, *Ob upotreblenii evreiami*, 136–158). Clearly, Liutostanskii told this story in such a way that the reader would believe what he said about the blood libel.

they had heard that over Easter, Jews needed Christian blood, and that they bought off their guilt with money.<sup>47</sup>

However, the Jews complained to the governor general, who sent his special envoy, Kermenskii. Then Žukovskis and others who had testified against the Jews changed their story. Žukovskis said that Petravičius had accidentally drowned and that, fearing blame for the death, Žukovskis thought up the story about child-stealing Jews. Along with his brother Juozapas, said Žukovskis, he had dragged the corpse out of the water and stabbed it to make their story appear more convincing. Apparently the idea of blaming Jews occurred to him naturally, since “he had heard talk in the area previously about how Jews torment Christian children because they need their blood.”<sup>48</sup> Witnesses appeared who said they had seen Augustinas Žukovskis going to visit his older brother Juozapas that day and had seen the two of them going off somewhere early the next morning. Juozapas apparently said that his “brother had done something stupid but he [Augustinas] put it right.” Kumzovna admitted making up the story about Jews chasing her. The Juciai, who had reported the disappearance of their child, admitted that he had been sent off to school and that they had made up the disappearance story so that the estate manager would not bother them.

This change in evidence was clearly connected with the conviction of the new investigating officer, Kermenskii, that the peasants had spoken out of superstition and that all Jewish involvement in the case had been fabricated. Although Žukovskis’s later tale that he had been beaten and threatened under interrogation is most likely exaggerated, Kermenskii likely used carrot-and-stick tactics. Several witnesses stated that, when exhorting Žukovskis to tell the truth, the investigator gave him not only a cake but also a bag of coins, which was later taken away from him after Žukovskis changed his story accordingly.

The new developments in the investigation did not satisfy local Christians, and so they complained to the governor general. As a result a new investigator was dispatched to Tel’shi. Witnesses reverted to

47 Material collected by the Tel’shi Castle Court, July 26, 1828, *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 6, b. 1086, l. 482–483. The accusation was maintained by one Jew, who was later murdered: Liutostanskii, *Ob upotreblenii evreiami*, 146–147.

48 Report by Kermenskii to the governor general of Lithuania, July 18, 1827, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1827 m., b. 826, l. 39.

their earlier versions of events about the two Jews who allegedly kidnapped the child.

The peasants most likely would not have maintained their blood-libel version of events so strongly without the support of the local social elite. The landowner Dimša was mentioned several times in Jewish complaints for apparently encouraging the peasants to give evidence against the Jews.<sup>49</sup> Kermenskii testified that Dimša had boasted to him of having an old Polish book proving that Jews needed Christian blood.<sup>50</sup>

The variety of witness evidence and the changes of investigators, which partly coincided with this, show that the conduct of the investigation depended to a great extent on the views of officials of varying ranks. Those such as Kermenskii, who were convinced from the outset that the murder accusations against Jews were based on superstition, were in the minority. However, there were also officials who believed it was obvious that Jews had murdered Petravičius because they needed Christian blood for Easter. Thus, when investigating this case, the Tel'shi Castle Court attempted to gather information about similar events from other areas that apparently proved the truth of the superstition. The court added the book *Złość żydowska* (Jewish Spite) to the evidence gathered.<sup>51</sup> According to Jewish evidence, one of the Jews was asked by one official during the investigation whether he had killed the boy "to obtain Christian blood, which Jews need for their matzot during the Passover."<sup>52</sup> As many as twenty-eight Jews were arrested,<sup>53</sup> according to one complaint, on the basis of Christian allegations of suspicious Jewish behavior at the time of the disappearance.<sup>54</sup> Even more interestingly, A. Žukovskis's brothers—one of whom, as seen

49 Jewish complaints, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1827 m., b. 826, l. 51–52, 274.

50 Report by Kermenskii to the governor general of Lithuania, July 18, 1827, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1827 m., b. 826, l. 41.

51 Report of the Tel'shi Castle Court to the Lithuanian Supreme Tribunal, May 8, 1828, *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 6, b. 1071, l. 339–342. This book (*Złość Żydowska przeciwko Bogu i bliźniemu prawdzie y sumnieniu na objaśnienie Talmudystów: na dowód ich zaślepienia, y religii dalekiej od prawa boskiego przez Moyżesza danego*, 1760) by Gaudenty Pikulski claimed that Jews, especially Orthodox Jews, tried to harm Christians in general.

52 Interrogation of David Glos, *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 6, b. 1071, l. 94.

53 Request from Favel' Katsen, May 27, 1827, *ibid.*, l. 62.

54 Admittedly, during the primary collection of evidence, some Jews bore false witness.

above, according to Augustinas's version presented to Kermenskii, was even involved in the crime—appeared to the Shavli Castle Court to be unworthy of suspicion.

The behavior of officials towards Jewish suspects speaks volumes in itself. According to the evidence of the accused, their hands and feet were bound; they were left outside all day without food and were forced to march to interrogation so quickly that they fell over; and their beards or one of their *peyot* were cut. Although interrogators later denied having treated the Jews in this way, much of the evidence suggests that at least some of the humiliations mentioned in the Jewish complaints did take place. They were indeed shackled outside all day without food, and preparations for beard-cutting did take place (one soldier was given a pair of scissors for this).<sup>55</sup> This manner of humiliating and mocking the appearance (and identity) of Jews was quite widespread.<sup>56</sup> Ekhezekel Kotik asserted that Polish rebels at Kamenets-Litovskii mocked Jews in this way in 1863.<sup>57</sup>

Discrepancies in the witness evidence, the changes in versions presented by Jews and Christians alike, and the large number of accusations that investigators acted unlawfully, let alone the effect of superstitions, made this investigation complicated. When it took over the case, the Lithuanian Supreme Court decided that a new investigation was required and so sent out new officials to this end.<sup>58</sup> According to one gendarme officer, who had no doubt that the whole business was designed to “ruin” (*razorit*) the Jews, the seventh investigation of the case began at the end of 1827.<sup>59</sup>

The death of a child, which local Christians interpreted as ritual murder, or perhaps even the tardy nature of the investigation into the crime, especially the repeated interrogations, increased interethnic tension. Thus “nowhere in Tel'shi District could Jews feel safe, for there was a general rumor that Jews harm Christians, so as soon as they see a Jew,

55 File “Ob ubiistve semiletnego Petrovicha Iosifa,” *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 6, b. 1071. Much of this case is devoted to examining this episode in the interrogation of the accused Jews.

56 Zborowski and Herzog, *Life Is with People*, 344.

57 Kotik, *Moi vospominaniia*, 218–219.

58 Report from the prosecutor of Vil'na Province to the governor general, April 13, 1829, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1827 m., b. 826, l. 218–224.

59 Secret report of the head of the First Section of the Fourth Corps of Gendarmes to the chief of gendarmes, November 16, 1829, *CAHJP*, HMF/764, l. 46.

boys and the people as a whole yell ‘murderer’ and throw stones at them, and even worse consequences can be expected.”<sup>60</sup> Information did indeed spread around the region by word of mouth, as interrogation material shows, and in some instances, stones were thrown at Jews.<sup>61</sup>

The inability of various levels of court to decide this case operatively may be explained not only by local circumstances (belief or otherwise in the blood libel) but also by the ambiguous signals being sent from the highest imperial authorities. Nicholas I was inclined to be suspicious of Jews. He associated the Tel’shi case with the Velizh case being investigated at the same time, in which Jews were accused of murdering a Christian for ritual reasons. The tsar instructed that “attention be paid to this case for its similarity with the Velizh case, which, alas, confirmed that not one but seven children were tormented.” But at the same time there were instructions to discern the truth and resolve the case quickly.<sup>62</sup> Such ambiguous signals from the capital may have added to delays in resolving the matter, which finally ended in 1838 when the Senate, on the basis of the imperial decree of 1817, ordered the release of all the accused Jews and the punishment of their accusers.<sup>63</sup>

#### THE DEATH OF A CHILD IN SHAVLI DISTRICT, 1861

The disappearance of a child in the village of Dervoniškės near the small town of Šiaulėnai and subsequent accusations of ritual murder in the early 1860s took place in quite a different context from that of the cases discussed above, which happened during relatively calm times. The first “thaw” in Russian history created quite favorable conditions for the formation of public opinion, primarily via the press. Various issues, including the “Jewish Question,” were discussed within the bounds established by the censors in the newspapers not only of the imperial capitals but also in Lithuania.<sup>64</sup> No less important was

60 Jewish complaint, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1827 m., b. 826, l. 274.

61 Minutes of interrogation; report of the victim; reconciliation agreement, *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 6, b. 1071, l. 269, 278, 281.

62 Report to the First Department of the Lithuanian Supreme Court, December 17, 1827, *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 6, b. 1086, l. 1; Gessen, *Velizhskaia drama*, 97.

63 Request sent by Jewish merchants to the tsar, August 1855, *RGIA*, f. 1269, op. 1, d. 53a, l. 3.

64 Sirutavičius, “Vilniaus intelektualinis elitas,” 107–126.

the fact that a Jewish press had already been established. The blood libel was so important an issue that various journals informed their readers about it.

Furthermore, a declaration on the Emancipation of the Serfs in February 1861 contributed considerably to social tensions in the villages. At the same time, this period was marked in the lands of the former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth with a mass mobilization. First and foremost, Bishop Motiejus Valančius (Maciej Wołoncewski) began his temperance movement in the Diocese of Samogitia (Tel'shi). Some historians think that mass refusal by Christians to consume alcohol led to a deterioration in their relations with Jews.<sup>65</sup> Such a conclusion is based on certain suppositions: the promoters of temperance, usually priests, inevitably criticized taverns, and the Jews who sold vodka in them, when they explained the harm done by alcohol.<sup>66</sup> Jews who thus lost large amounts of income would feel antipathy towards Christians. In the parish of Šiaulėnai, local priest Augustinas Kybartas began the temperance campaign in 1846, considerably earlier than Valančius's campaign.<sup>67</sup> According to witnesses, no local Christian consumed alcohol here in the 1860s.<sup>68</sup>

The same year as the aforementioned blood libel case, religious-patriotic demonstrations began in the lands of the Commonwealth occupied by Russia, and the uprising against the government began in January 1863. Unlike in the Kingdom of Poland, where Jewish acculturation and integration into Polish society affected a considerable part of the community, these processes in the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania were much more marginal. Fewer Lithuanian Jews took part in demonstrations or in the uprising itself, and support for the rebels usually boiled down to the provision of food, clothing, military equipment,

65 Biržiška, *Lietuvių tautos kelias*, 35; Zalkin, "Antisemitism in Lithuania," 140.

66 "I swear also to take care not to be deceived by Jews who mix hooch with beer or sell vodka instead of wine, because all kinds of (intoxicating) drink are a sin": Valančius, *Ganytojiški laiškai*, 79 (the second temperance letter to the people, August 9, 1860).

67 Merkys, *Motiejus Valančius*, 336.

68 Report from Mikhneev, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1861m., b. 376, l. 168. The claim that the temperance movement provoked more Jewish conversions to Catholicism than usual (Šėnavičienė, *Dvasininkija ir lietuviybė*, 234–237) has not been based on any facts thus far and is hardly credible.

or information.<sup>69</sup> In Lithuanian Jewish communities, support for the tsar was usually stronger than support for the uprising; the clearest example of this can be seen in the maskil Lev Levanda's novel *Goria-chee vremia* (Seething Times).<sup>70</sup> However, Jews' attempts to prove their loyalty in all manner of ways to the tsar did not convince many officials, who thought that the Jewish response to the uprising was opportunistic—that is, that they were ready to support whichever side was stronger.<sup>71</sup> This Jewish response is reflected in a song written by Bishop Valančius about Jews who supplied *matériel* to the rebels and those who reported them to the authorities.<sup>72</sup>

There were cases where the rebels murdered unarmed Jews. One such story about Jewish orphans from the village of Gulinaï (Ponevezh [Panevėžys] District, Kovno Province) is particularly savage: for betraying rebels to the authorities, their father was hanged along with their mother, and peasants stole their property. Peasants are said to have responded to their pleas for help with mockery.<sup>73</sup> However, even if the events described in this dreadful story really did happen, it does not say much about interethnic relations, because specific people were killed for their particular or alleged actions. There are no data to show that in this or other cases, when the rebels punished specific Jews in one way or another, the violence or their antipathy extended to Jews as a group.<sup>74</sup> Some of these political tendencies were reflected in the story of the cited case of blood libel.

69 Nadel, "O stosunku żydów," 39–63; Eisenbach et al., *Żydzi a powstanie styczniowe*; G. Petkevičaitė's letter to A. Steponaitienė, April 1, 1936, *LNMMB RS*, f. 25–514, l. 1 (the author of the letter records memoirs of the uprising told to her by her parents).

70 B. Horowitz, "A Jewish Russifier in Despair," 279–298; Dohrn, *Jüdische Eliten*, 289–296. A maskil is a supporter of the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment) movement.

71 Secret report by Aleksandr Losev, officer of gendarmes, to the head of gendarmes, July 24, 1863, *LVIA*, f. 419, ap. 2, b. 157, l. 73.

72 Biržiška, *Dainų atsiminimai*, 90–91.

73 Requests by Nacham and Shmerel' Rafailov to the aide of the governor general of Vil'na, December 1, 1864, April 30, 1866, and 1867 (no later than March 2), *LVIA*, f. 378, ps. 1863 m., 1372g, l. 180–181, *ibid.*, 1372e, l. 14, 15–15a.

74 In Kamenets-Litovskii, according to Kotik's memoirs, after the Uprising began, the Poles clearly treated Jews like second-class people, mocked them, and even spread rumors that they would be slaughtered again as they were during Khmel'nitskii's Rebellion: Kotik, *Moi vospominaniia*, 219–220.

On January 25, 1861, in the village of Derveniškės (Šiaulėnai Rural District, Shavli District, Kovno Province), a four-year-old girl named Dorota disappeared. She was the daughter of a peasant, Antanas Gelažius, who worked for the landowner Jonas Šemeta. Witnesses came forward who had heard the child's cries and had seen two Jews driving by, although it later transpired that the Jews had driven by considerably earlier than the time the girl disappeared. The girl's body was found only after the snow began to melt on March 3.<sup>75</sup>

Although investigators were told that Dorota's death may have been caused by snow falling off the roof of her house—that is, in a certain sense, by parental neglect—the girl's disappearance caused locals to “recall” stories about the Jewish need for Christian blood. The girl's grandmother recalled a case from sixty years earlier in which Jews in Šiaulėnai had been accused of murdering a woman.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, Jews had been accused of such a crime in 1799.<sup>77</sup> Such a reading of historical documents served only one purpose: to prove that Jews did need Christian blood. Peasants were not the only people to harbor this superstition. The day after the disappearance, at the insistence of the Šiaulėnai estate managers, the local policeman and a “peasant mob” carried out a search of the local synagogue, school, bathhouse, and the rabbi's house. On the night of February 1–2, such searches were repeated with more people, including the estate manager. The searches were thorough; even kosher meat was examined.<sup>78</sup> According to the Vil'na Hebrew newspaper *Ha-karmel*, the policeman even asked

75 Files “Po zapiske Shavel'skogo zemskogo ispravnika o umershchvlenii budto-by Shavlianskimi evreiami devochki Gelazhisuvny,” *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1861 m., b. 376; “O komandirovanii Shtabs-Kapitana Skliarenko v Shavel'skii uezd dlia dosledovaniia dela o propavshei 25 ianvaria v d. Dyrvanishkakh 4kh letnei devochke Dorote Gelazhisovoi,” *LVIA*, f. 419, ap. 2, b. 128; “Po otnosheniiu Aziatskogo Departamenta: otnositel'no istolkovaniia perevoda mest iz Evreiskoi molitvennoi knigi ‘Sidor-Ripa-Utfima’ ukazannykh Evreem Itsyksonom, prikosnovennym k delu ob ubiistve devochki Gelazhisuvny,” *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 8, d. 322.

76 Mikhneev's opinion on this case, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1861 m., b. 376, l. 205.

77 Report by the governor of Kovno to the governor general of Vil'na, November 23, 1864, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1861 m., b. 376, l. 313. Elsewhere this incident was said to have taken place in 1794: Mikhneev's opinion on this case, *ibid.*, l. 205.

78 Official letter by the governor general of Vil'na to his adjutant Tolstoi, March 1861 (day not specified), *ibid.*, l. 2.



whether the meat was human flesh.<sup>79</sup> Other circumstances illustrate the enthusiasm of the local police and other authorities for the case: after the girl's body was found, it was taken directly into town without medical examination; Jews were interrogated without the presence of a representative, even though the law required his presence; two Jews were arrested and then detained under house arrest; the Shavli District Court required Jews who appealed against the way the case was conducted to remain at home. Another important source of anti-Jewish sentiment in this case was the manor house, specifically the estate manager, Mykolas Grudzinskis,<sup>80</sup> and certain other local gentry. Narbutas, a member of the Shavli District Court who sat on the investigation commission, read the verdict of the case heard sixty years earlier.

To make the blood-libel version in the Šiaulėnai case more credible, a witness was summoned whose story would be a key argument in the accusations against the Jews. This witness was a local Jew, Lipman Itsikson. He asserted that he had seen two Jews, Srol' Blokh and Zundel Lipes, transporting a child that day. Later he saw the child dead under the rabbi's roof and, after that, in Blokh's house. He had also seen a red bottle of the girl's blood and, furthermore, recalled how the Jews had covered the child's bleeding corpse with some kind of balm, and there appeared to be no wound. This evidence was crowned with a summary: "I bear witness that Jews use Christian blood according to an age-old custom and have books describing how to use blood and curse Christians." Itsikson himself said he had read these books and was ready to show where they were.<sup>81</sup> During the investigation it emerged that Itsikson had a criminal record (he was suspected of

79 *Ha-karmel* 38 (1861).

80 Mikhneev's opinion on this case, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1861 m., b. 376, l. 218–219; request by Mykolas Grudzinskis to the governor general of Vil'na, March 11, 1861, *ibid.*, l. 220–223. This text clearly reveals Grudzinskis's antipathy towards Jews.

81 Itsikson's evidence included in the report made to the governor general by the latter's adjutant, Tolstoi, and the "learned Jew" [*uchenyi evrei*] Lev Levanda, March 30, 1861, *ibid.*, l. 15–18. Judeophobic literature made much of Itsikson's testimony: Liutostanskii, *Ob upotreblenii evreiami*, 324–329.

stealing horses), and at one time he even intended to get baptized.<sup>82</sup> Itsikson's story is reminiscent of other superstitions common among Christians (the books describing the need for Christian blood and the belief that Jews treat wounds with Christian blood). Even so, there is still the possibility that Itsikson thought up this story on his own, because he appeared alone before the interrogation commission, and most likely thanks to his account, tales spread that Jews required Christian blood before celebrating Passover.<sup>83</sup>

After falling into the hands of the governor general of Vil'na, Itsikson changed his story and claimed that the estate manager and a doctor had forced him to blame the Jews.<sup>84</sup> Later Itsikson returned to his original story and blamed the Jews once more.<sup>85</sup>

Thus if this case had remained in the hands of local officials, it would most likely have ended in the prosecution and conviction of the Jews. But information about the case became a subject of public debate, and via bureaucratic channels and Jewish appeals, it came to the attention of the governor general of Vil'na, Vladimir Nazimov.

Public debate over this incident reached not only the local Vil'na press (the case was discussed by the official local newspaper *Kurjer Wileński* [*Vilenskii vestnik*] and the maskilic newspaper *Ha-karmel*) but also by the Russian Jewish press (*Rassvet*) and even the central imperial newspapers (*Severnaia Pchela*).<sup>86</sup> In such discussions Jewish representatives accused the local elite (the Šiaulėnai landowner and the priest) of encouraging anti-Jewish superstitions, while representatives of the local social elite defended the aforementioned people and even implied that the girl's death may indeed have been at Jewish

82 *Ha-karmel* 38 (1861); Report by governor general's adjutant, Tolstoi, and the "learned Jew" L. Levanda to governor general of Vil'na, March 30, 1861; Mikhneev's report, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1861 m., b. 376, l. 14, 112–113.

83 Report by governor general's adjutant, Tolstoi, and L. Levanda to governor general of Vil'na, March 30, 1861; Mikhneev's report; Mikhneev's opinion on this case, *ibid.*, l. 13, 138, 197.

84 Report by governor general's adjutant, Tolstoi, and L. Levanda to governor general of Vil'na, March 30, 1861, *ibid.*, l. 18–19.

85 Itsikson's evidence, September 30, *ibid.*, l. 314.

86 Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question*, 419–420.

hands.<sup>87</sup> The Warsaw rabbi Ber Meisels also attempted to defend the Jews of Šiaulėnai.<sup>88</sup>

However, the fate of the case depended not so much on public debates as on official action. It is hard to suspect Governor General Nazimov of favoring Jews. When Tsar Alexander II visited Vil'na on October 6, 1860, Nazimov presented him with proposals for changing the situation of the Jewish population. The governor general blamed the Jewish community itself for the harsh conditions. Jews, according to Nazimov, were "voluntary proletariat" who were involved in the most varied unlawful economic activities (deceit, forgery, smuggling) and regarded agriculture as beneath them. During the previous seven years, Nazimov continued, they had committed most of the crimes in Vil'na Province, and most of them, led by fanatical rabbis, did not wish to change anything. Furthermore, he said, they were geniuses at selling vodka and corrupted the morals of the common people. All these ills could be seen clearly: "on a work day in summer, when the common people work hard, it is enough to look upon our towns, and the eye will instinctively turn to the crowd of idle Jews and Jewesses, dressed in awful, torn clothes, who sit or trudge lazily near the houses or in the market, where no one sells anything." In other words, the governor general concluded that Jews could not be granted equal rights. First of all, Jews had to be encouraged to change their economic activities and education.<sup>89</sup> However, the most pressing problem in the Northwestern Region at that time was the "Polish Question," and here Nazimov changed his position no later than March 1861. Previously he had sought to make a compromise with the local gentry elite. But as

87 "Proishestvie v Shavlianakh," *Severnaia pchela* 80 (1861); Pomeschchik B. [?], "Proishestvie v Shavlianakh. (K izdateliu Severnoi pchely)," *ibid.*, 124 (1861); "Proishestvie v Shavlianakh. (K izdateliu Severnoi pchely)," *Vilenskii vestnik* 24 (1861); Sirutavičius, "Kai prietarai tampa prievarta," 108. "Landowner B" stressed that the author of the first letter dated February 24 (the letter also mentions February 26) published in *Rassvet* and later *Severnaia Pchela*, L. Gordon, mentions that the girl's body was found near the parents' house, while the girl was found only on March 3 in the fields. This discrepancy in the dates, according to "Landowner B," was "a prophetic guess on Gordon's part," by which he meant that the Jews did indeed know from the outset what had happened to the girl.

88 Żyndul, *Kłamstwo krwi*, 100.

89 Report by the governor general of Vil'na to the tsar, October 6, 1860, *RGIA*, f. 1282, op. 2, d. 64, l. 1–14.

soon as the patriotic demonstrations began, Nazimov realized that he would not be able to reach a compromise with the Lithuanian gentry and that a different ethno-political strategy was required. One of his new aims was to ensure Jewish loyalty towards the imperial authorities and prevent them from making common cause with the Poles. At the same time, he may have favored implementing reforms concerning the Jews in the Northwestern Region similar to those that Alexander Wielopolski initiated in the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>90</sup>

Thus the governor general of Vil'na decided to send his subordinates to the scene of the crime. The course of further investigation depended very much on whom Nazimov selected to carry out this task. A few years later in Vil'na, the examining commission's chairman, a man named Afanas'ev, rushed to the governor general after his own son had disappeared and not only blamed Jews for kidnapping him for their "Easter" matzot but also threatened half the Jews of Vil'na for the crime.<sup>91</sup> For the Šiaulėnai mission Nazimov selected his adjutant, Tolstoi, and even more importantly, the "learned Jew" Levanda (mentioned above). The entrusting of this task to one of the most prominent local maskilim would suggest that Nazimov himself did not believe in the superstition and sought to calm Jews both in Šiaulėnai and elsewhere. Indeed Tolstoi and Levanda's mission consisted of two parts: to unmask Itsikson (which they managed to do at the end of March when the witness changed his evidence, as noted above) and to calm both communities. Both officials invested no less energy in achieving the second aim than the first: they asked the local rabbi and Jewish representatives to encourage their coreligionists to behave peacefully and without provocation, while asking the local priest to calm down his parishioners.<sup>92</sup>

90 Staliūnas, "Changes in the Political Situation," 21–43.

91 Medišauskienė, "'Ottalkivaiushchii, no bez nego ne oboitis,'" 100.

92 Report by governor general's adjutant, Tolstoi, and the "learned Jew" L. Levanda to governor general of Vil'na, March 30, 1861, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1861 m., b. 376, l. 13, 20–21. As Levanda himself claims, this mission raised his authority considerably in the Jewish community, which regarded the maskilim with suspicion. "Two weeks ago they [the Jews of Vil'na] were ready to spit in my face, but now they carry me on their hands": L. Levanda's letter to I. Zalkind, March 31, 1861: Landau, "Iz perepiski," 10. The abovementioned Lieutenant Mikhneev should be counted among the officials seeking to unmask Itsikson and prove the groundless nature of the blood libel.

Despite the fact that repeated medical examinations found that the girl had died of hypothermia and that there were no signs of “blood-letting,”<sup>93</sup> the investigation dragged on because the testimony of the prime witness, Itsikson, changed several times. In 1862, bearing in mind the fact that the Shavli District Court might be biased (two of its members worked on the interrogation commission in the case) and because of the “superstition rooted in this region regarding the kidnapping of children for obtaining blood,” a decision was made to hand the case over to a court in Pskov Province.<sup>94</sup> A verdict was given in this case only in 1872. The most important conclusion drawn by the Pskov court was that Itsikson had given false testimony and thus should be exiled to Siberia.<sup>95</sup>

The girl’s disappearance, the resulting investigation, the discovery of the body, and Itsikson’s testimony not only increased ethnic tension between Christians and Jews around Šiaulėnai but also raised considerable fears among other Lithuanian Jewish communities. The governor general of Vil’na and the influential maskil Samuel Finn received complaints and appeals from Jewish communities not only in Šiaulėnai but also in Shavli, Kovno, and Vil’na.<sup>96</sup> These texts not only complained of unlawful action by the police but also asked for protection from insults and physical attacks, which had already claimed their first victims. The most important instigator of anti-Jewish sentiment was the local priest, Father Mieczkowski, who, along with Bishop Valančius,

93 Report by a gendarme officer to the head of gendarmes, May 18, 1861, *LVIA*, f. 419, ap. 2, b. 128, l. 10.

94 Senate Order, October 18, 1862, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1861 m., b. 376, l. 290–291. After the Uprising was put down and local officials in Lithuania replaced en masse with new arrivals from Russia, the authorities in Pskov Province sought to send the case back to the Northwestern Region: official letter from the governor of Pskov to the governor general of Vil’na, May 30, 1864, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1861 m., b. 376, l. 306.

95 Report about Dorota Gelažius, July 7, 1872, *ibid.*, l. 349–360.

96 *Ha-karmel* 38 (1861); official letter from the governor general of Vil’na to his adjutant Tolstoi, March 1861 (day not specified); S. Finn’s letter to the head of the chancellery of the governor general of Vil’na, April 5, 1861; letter from Vil’na Jewish community to the governor general of Vil’na, April 24, 1861; I. Katsenelenbogen’s letter to the governor general of Vil’na, January 25, 1862; letter from Shavli rabbi Sh. Rabinovitch to the governor general of Vil’na, December 15, 1861, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1861 m., b. 376, l. 2, 10, 74–75, 238–240, 244–245.

denied such accusations.<sup>97</sup> The priest also said that the depiction of the girl's funeral given in complaints was pure invention. It was claimed that Dorota was buried in a very elaborate fashion like a martyr, with a religious procession of 200 torches.

In order to ensure a swifter reaction to the complaints, I. Katsenelenbogen and the Shavli rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitch tried to take advantage of growing anti-Polish sentiment in official circles: "We shall be safe only when the case is transferred to instances or provinces dominated by a real Russian element and where the fate of subjects is decided on the impartiality of [Russian] Orthodox officials rather than religious or national antipathy."<sup>98</sup> A specific request was made that the authorities later granted, namely to transfer the case to Pskov Province.<sup>99</sup> Thus some Jews, especially the maskilim, sought official favor by trying to convince the authorities that they had a common foe, namely the Poles (Catholics).

These complaints probably exaggerated the perils facing Jews. Information given about victims was abstract, and other evidence from non-Jewish sources has not been found. As far as is known, the authorities did not open any investigation into any murders of Jews, which they would have done if such facts had been confirmed. However, even if there were no such victims, accusations connected with the blood libel increased ethnic tensions considerably in the area around Šiaulėnai, where Jews were afraid of physical violence, even if none took place.

#### POGROM IN THE VILEIKA DISTRICT (VIL'NA PROVINCE), 1886

The disappearance of a twelve-year-old boy, Stanislav Krasovskii, in Dolginovo (Vileika District, Vil'na Province, now Daūhinava [Belarus]) on May 22, 1886, and the discovery of his body on May 26, as in the cases mentioned already, incited local peasants and provoked a superstiti-

97 Report by Father Mieczkowski to the bishop, April 29, 1861, Valančius's letter to the governor general of Vil'na, May 2, 1861, *ibid.*, I. 78–79, 76–77.

98 Letter from Shavli rabbi Sh. Rabinovitch to the governor general of Vil'na, December 15, 1861, *ibid.*, I. 245.

99 Katsenelenbogen's letter to the governor general of Vil'na, January 25, 1862, *ibid.*, I. 239.

ous response.<sup>100</sup> This case differed from earlier ones only in that these incidents took place after the first wave of pogroms in the Russian Empire, which struck in the early 1880s,<sup>101</sup> that is, after the belief formed in the minds of many imperial subjects that the “Jewish Question” could be solved with the aid of collective violence.

Despite the unambiguous medical conclusion that the boy was killed by suffocation and that no stab wounds had been found, rumors spread around the neighborhood that the boy had been stabbed and his veins slit. This version later spread in the press:

The external examination of the victim revealed that his whole body was covered in stab wounds, nails had been pushed under his fingernails, the veins were cut beneath his knees, there were cuts on his neck and the back of his head, and the eyes, which were filled with fear, protruded; the corpse seemed fresh, washed and dressed in the deceased’s own shirt, which, to many who saw it, had no blood stains on it. The postmortem showed that death was due to a loss of blood, two drachmas of which were found in the head; the stomach had been thoroughly emptied and had traces of the application of castor oil.<sup>102</sup>

100 Disappearances of children, a rise in ethnic tension, and cases of collective violence are recorded in the press and court cases: *Ha-melits* 47 (1886): 736; *ibid.*, 48 (1886): 752; files “Po obvineniiu v ubiistve krest’ianskogo mal’chika Krasovskogo,” *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 9; “Donesenie Vilenskogo gubernatora o rasprostranении slukhov v gubernii o predstoiashchem evreiskom pogrome i o nepravil’nom osvoboždenii iz pod sledstviia sudebnym sledovatelem 3 uchastka Borisovskogo uezda–K. Polianskogo, byv. uchastnika evreiskogo pogroma,” *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 9, b. 10; “O priniatii mer k preduprezhdeniiu mogushchikh byt’ anti-evreiskikh bezporiadkov v m. Kobylnikakh, Svetsianskogo uezda,” *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 43, b. 170; “O proishedshikh v m. Dolginove, Vileiskogo uezda, bezporiadkakh mezhdru khristianami i evreiami,” *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 43, b. 147; “Po otn. Minskago Gubernatora o byvshikh evreiskikh bezporiadkakh v kolonii ‘Beloe’ Borisovskogo uezda,” *GARF*, f. 102, 2-e deloproizvodstvo, op. 76, d. 332; “O evreiskikh bezporiadkakh, byvshikh v m. Dolginove, Vileiskogo uezda, Vilenskoi gubernii,” *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, op. 43, 1886 g., d. 158, ch. 1.

101 See Chapter Three.

102 “Eshsche ob anti-evreiskikh bezporiadkakh v m. Dolginove,” *Kievlianin* 141 (1886). Similar report: V. Zhuravskii, “Vil’no,” *Svet* 132 (1886). Later newspapers denied the story: “Oproverzhenie,” *Novoe vremia* 3717 (1886); “Oproverzhenie,” *Svet*, 145 (1886). In Russia (and elsewhere) a drachma (dram) was an imperial weight used by apothecaries, equivalent to one-eighth of an ounce, or sixty grains.

Both the rumors and the newspaper article quoted above directly and indirectly inspired the belief that a Jewish ritual killing had taken place. Even in cases such as the excerpt quoted above, when the suspected culprits were not named directly, everyone interpreted it as the work of Jews, because such descriptions of the corpse echoed Christian stories of ritual killing. Krasovskii, as the press reported, became a virtual saint: he was buried at public expense, and “an exultant crowd of a thousand people carried away handfuls of sand from the grave of the martyr, which they considered holy.”<sup>103</sup>

After the body was found, according to officials, small conflicts erupted between Christians and Jews, and on June 12, during the Dolginovo fair, these escalated into a pogrom. Although local police reports suggested that preparations for the pogrom had begun on May 22, when the boy’s corpse was found, no evidence of such preparations was given, while the course the pogrom took suggested that it was a spontaneous event. The duration of the pogrom (three to four hours) was similar to that of many other outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania. However, this pogrom did not begin around lunch time (violence, when it happened, would usually begin after church services) but only around 5 p.m., after a small incident involving a Jewish tradesman and a Christian, during which the Jew struck several Gentiles. There was no reason to begin planned violence at an hour when some of the peasants were already beginning to leave town.

Undoubtedly, one of the main factors that provoked the violence was a Christian desire to take “revenge” on the Jews for the alleged ritual murder. Such an interpretation would be confirmed not only by the timing of the pogrom (several weeks after the discovery of the corpse<sup>104</sup>) and interpretations drawn by local officials but also shouts from the mob, which were written down: “The Yids beat us and rob us and drink our blood—beat them up!”<sup>105</sup> “What! The Yids drink our blood, we go off to the army instead of them, they ruin us and even

103 “Eshsche ob anti-evreiskikh bezporiadcakh.”

104 A pogrom could happen in a shtetl only during a fair, market, or religious feast day, when peasants from surrounding areas would gather in town.

105 Report by the prosecutor, Vil’na Chamber of Justice, to the minister of justice, June 24, 1886, LVIA, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 9, l. 25.



have the gall to beat us! Hoorah, lads, get the Yids.”<sup>106</sup> One of the peasants found a book recounting similar accusations against Jews in Trent in 1473. In other words, written tradition as well as oral folklore sustained this superstition. On the other hand, the quoted slogans show that antipathy was generated not only by the blood-libel superstition (“they drink our blood”) but also by other imagined Jewish crimes, such as economic exploitation (“they ruin us and rob us”)<sup>107</sup> and avoidance of conscription (“we go off to the army instead of them”).<sup>108</sup> Understandably, the final straw may have been the conflict during the fair: real or apparent violence against several peasants was regarded as a humiliation for the whole peasant-Christian community. In other words, part of the Christian community here, as in other parts of Lithuania, had a certain antipathy towards Jews, but for this to erupt into collective violence, special conditions were necessary, such as the death of a child and the invocation of the blood libel, or a conflict at the fair.

*Revenge*-inspired attackers first began to destroy Jewish goods and rob the ironmonger’s shop. After arming themselves with iron tools, they attacked locked shops, destroying and looting goods there. Later, they divided up into groups and began to smash the windows of Jewish homes and break into certain houses. According to different sources, between twenty and thirty Jews complained of being attacked. The pleas to the authorities to provide protection included dreadful images: “They beat many to death. Many were wounded,” and “blood filled the streets.”<sup>109</sup> *Ha-melits* published rumors that one woman had been killed.<sup>110</sup> But according to some officials, the Jews were inclined to exaggerate both their losses and the occasions of bodily harm: “The mob did not beat the Jews themselves, but just destroyed their proper-

106 Report of the chief of the Administration of the Vil’na Province Gendarmerie to the Police Department, June 18, 1886, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, op. 43, 1886 g., d. 158, ch. 1, l. 22.

107 It is no surprise that this allegation, that Jews exploited peasants and thus provoked (justified) discontent, was stressed by local officials: Report by the governor general of Vil’na to the interior minister, July 31, 1886, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, op. 43, 1886 g., d. 158, ch. 1, l. 52. This view, as seen in Chapter Three, dominated the official interpretations of the 1881–1882 pogroms.

108 See Chapter Three.

109 Jewish telegrams, June 12, 1886, *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 43, b. 147, l. 7, 9.

110 *Ha-melits* 47 (1886): 736.

ty; only those who came to hand and showed opposition were hurt.”<sup>111</sup> Many of the extant contemporary sources indicate that there were few instances of bodily harm.<sup>112</sup>

Although some official reports allege that the police put an end to the violence, another version found in official reports—namely, that the violence ceased because the peasants simply went home—is more convincing. The fact that a pogrom had been expected in the town and that a considerable police presence (of more than fifty policemen) was established that was incapable of halting the violence supports such an interpretation. Presumably the police did not make much of an effort to intervene. Official reports note that various objects were thrown at the police and they were threatened, but none of them was even slightly injured.<sup>113</sup>

Even so, the end of the pogrom in Dolginovo did not mean the end of violence altogether. As they journeyed home to neighboring villages, the perpetrators continued to ransack Jewish homes as they had done in Dolginovo, and in the days that followed, violence, albeit on a smaller scale, took place not only in Vileika District but also in nearby Borisovo District (Minsk Province).<sup>114</sup> In one village in that district, peasants from the surrounding area penned a flyer that not only outlined defensive tactics for their arrested “blood brothers” but also invited their coreligionists to attack Jews and leave alone only those

111 Report of the chief of the Administration of the Vil’na Province Gendarmerie to the Police Department, June 18, 1886, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, op. 43, 1886 g., d. 158 ch. 1, l. 23. A note from the governor general of Vil’na to the interior minister (July 31, 1886) says that one Christian later died from injuries received in the pogrom. However, there is reason to doubt this statement. First, contemporary sources do not mention any serious Jewish opposition. Second, the governor does not give the person’s name and surname, which are usually mentioned in such cases: *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, op. 43, 1886 g., d. 158, ch. 1, l. 53.

112 Copy of the protocol, *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 43, b. 147, l. 31.

113 *Ha-melits* mentions the assertion that violence was also used against the police (*Ha-melits* 48 [1886]: 752). However, as with many other details of the pogrom mentioned in this newspaper, no mention of this is made in other sources.

114 For some reason, officials included cases of anti-Jewish violence in 1887 in Šeduva (Kovno Province), and collective violence against Jews in Dokshitsy (Minsk Province) in these files: “Po otn. Minskogo Gubernatora o byvshikh evreiskikh bezporiadkakh v kolonii ‘Beloe’ Borisovskogo uezda,” *GARF*, f. 102, 2-e deloproizvodstvo, op. 76, d. 332, l. 8–10.

who promised to accept baptism. The tension in Dolginovo and nearby villages also continued because investigators failed to find the true culprit. Suspicion fell on one horse herdsman, but at the same time, allegations of a "Jewish lead" multiplied among the peasantry. In autumn 1886 one peasant purchased a coat for his son from a Jew, and as soon as the son put it on, the father's heart apparently began to ache, and at night he would dream of the murdered Krasovskii boy. It was no surprise that Krasovskii recognized this coat and certain other items bought from Jews as having belonged to his son. Fear of pogroms remained strong among Jews not only for the rest of the summer but also in December, when rumors increased of a possible repeat of the pogrom. Jews were fearful not only when they encountered the circumstances mentioned above but also when Christian acquaintances warned them of the possibility of such action, and when drunkards terrorized them or told them of the tsar's decree that allegedly permitted Jew-baiting.

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF A WOMAN  
AND SUBSEQUENT POGROM IN ALEKSANDROVSK (ROSSIENY  
DISTRICT, KOVNO PROVINCE), 1892

During the last ten days of March 1892, the peasant woman Marijona Butkus disappeared from the township of Aleksandrovsk (now Žemaičių Naumiestis) in Rossieny (Raseiniai) District (Kovno Province). She was seen for the last time in the tavern of a Jewish man, Levin Berelevich, around Passover (March 31), which local officials and the Lithuanian Catholic newspaper *Žemaičių ir Lietuvos apžvalga* (Survey of Lithuania and Samogitia) called "Jewish Easter." This circumstance gave rise to talk that she had been killed so that "her blood might be used for matzot," while her body remained in the tavern. As a correspondent of the newspaper wrote, witnesses, including a Jewish woman who had converted to Catholicism, claimed to have heard her father say, "they managed to kill a Christian woman. First the rabbi himself stabbed the woman, then other Jews set about stabbin' 'er."

According to the cited correspondence, the local Catholic community felt not only harmed but also abandoned by the authorities, since officials did not believe the blood libel the peasants presented to them. Several days later, after Easter, on April 8 a mob armed with sticks (some sources say 60 to 300 people were involved) gathered near

Berelevich's tavern and tried to break in, but they were hampered by local police. The crowd that had gathered demanded the handover of the corpse, from which they claimed the Jews had drunk all the blood. Furthermore, they attacked Jews in the town with sticks, inflicting slight bodily harm, as a doctor would allege later. The pogrom lasted around two hours, and when the peasants began to depart, according to the newspaper correspondent and local police reports, the Jews started to retaliate. After arming themselves with sticks, they attacked peasants, and "both sides began to fight." It is interesting that of the twenty accused, some of whom were later sentenced to eight months in prison, only five were younger than thirty years old. Thus this pogrom was hardly a youthful expression of fun.

After the pogrom, tension remained. Catholics threatened to teach the Jews another lesson, and there were smaller incidents in other nearby places, such as Sartininkai, near Tauragė. *Žemaičių ir Lietuvos apžvalga* most likely added to the strength of anti-Jewish sentiment. In the first of two articles on these events, the newspaper not only presented the Catholic community's version but also reminded its readership of literature describing the blood libel and reporting specific cases of ritual murder in Lithuania and other countries (mentioning the infamous Damascus case of 1840).<sup>115</sup>

#### THE BLONDES CASE, VIL'NA, 1900

This is the most infamous of all nineteenth-century Lithuanian blood-libel cases. News of the incident spread around the empire at the beginning of the twentieth century, and historians often cite it still.

<sup>115</sup> Two files contain information about this pogrom. Many of the facts from the case mentioned in this short description, primarily evidence from witnesses, the accused, and the victims, are repeated many times: "O krest'ianakh Rossienskogo uezda Osipe Charkuse, Osipe Butkuse i dr., obv. v prichinenii poboiev evreiam m. Aleksandrovskoe," *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 209; "O kr. Osipe Charkuse, Pavle i Petre Shedisakh, Osipe Bal'chitise i dr. obv. (po 269, 1 st. Ulozh. o nak.) s zakliucheniem: 1e, priostanovlenii sledstviia v otnoshenii Petra Liavchusa i 2e, o prekrashchenii sledstviia v otnoshenii Osipa Shul'tsa, obv. po 269,1 St. Ulozh. o Nakaz. (v uchastii v evreiskom pogrome)," *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 1406. See also: Az-oe [?], "Naumiestic," *Žemaičių ir Lietuvos apžvalga* 9 (1892): 69–70, "Naumiestic," *ibid.*, 13 (1892): 103.

Several circumstances set this blood libel apart from other Lithuanian cases. First and foremost, it happened in the largest town in Lithuania, and thus information about it spread more widely and more rapidly. Second, in the early twentieth century, mass literacy and the wealth of periodical literature were already greater than, for example, in 1861. Third, famous activists from the Russian Jewish community defended the accused, thereby generating more attention for the case. Fourth, the verdict of the first court in this case found the accused, David Blondes, guilty.

This case of blood libel was later recalled by Lithuanian newspapers. Thus when the infamous Beilis case opened in Kiev, the newspaper *Rygos garsas* (Voice of Riga) wrote, “here we should recall a similar case to that of Juščinskis [Iushchinskii], twelve years ago, when at Tartar Street in Vil’na, a seven-year-old boy was killed. This was done by the Jew Blondes, a surgeon’s assistant, whom the police caught red-handed with a razor in his hand along with a gang of Jews. Blondes was sentenced to hard labor for murdering the child, although his reasons for doing so were unknown.”<sup>116</sup> As will be seen later, the details of this story bear little resemblance to the actual events in Vil’na in 1900, but the very “recollection” of the fact is important.

Thus during the night of March 1–2, 1900, a peasant woman named Vincenta Grudzinska came to a police station in Vil’na and reported that two masked persons, one of whom may have been her master, David Blondes, attacked and tried to kill her, cutting her neck and arm. According to Grudzinska, as soon as she escaped, she went to her cousin. Meanwhile, Blondes’s wife testified that one night, probably in collusion with her cousin, Grudzinska decided to rob them and opened the door, and forced her way into the flat, where she beat her master. Although Grudzinska claimed that her relations with her master and mistress were good, there was likely some source of tension: before this incident took place, she had reportedly been invited by a policeman from her native Paberžė to visit him and had gone away, although it emerged that the policeman had made no such invitation. Moreover, Grudzinska had just demanded a bigger wage than was originally agreed to. During questioning at the police station, Grudzinska alleged she did not know the reason for the attack, but caretakers who

116 Redakcijos priedas [Editor’s Comment], “Beiliso byla [Beilis’s Case],” *Rygos garsas* 76 (1913).

accompanied her began to assert unanimously that the Jews had most likely wished to obtain Christian blood for matzot because the major Jewish feast of Purim [sic!] would begin.<sup>117</sup>

The blood libel had spread among the urban plebs, but local Jews saw evidence here of an educated Christian (Polish) hand at work here. Local police officers received complaints from Jews claiming that educated Poles were spreading “various legends and tales” among the common masses to punish the Jews for having adopted the Russian language and culture, so that over Easter the masses would carry out “barbaric medieval violence.”<sup>118</sup> Later Jewish tradition mentions a “group of Jesuits” who organized these accusations.<sup>119</sup> It is also difficult to explain why the liberal Vil’na lawyer Tadeusz Wróblewski represented Grudzinska in court.<sup>120</sup> Rumors of ritual murder soon spread in the city and its environs. The memoirs of one gendarme suggest that Vil’na offered fertile soil for such superstitions to spread, especially in the days before Easter.<sup>121</sup> Near Vil’na in mid-March, Jews were not only beaten but also accused of using Christian blood for their matzot.<sup>122</sup> Another case reveals the spread and power of the blood libel. One man named Dainovskii was caught stealing nails from a Jewish shop; he immediately claimed that the Jews wanted to drag him into the cellar, and later he claimed they wanted to cut him up to make

117 Files “O privilechenii k sudebnoi otvetstvennosti Blondisa, obviniaemogo v pokushenii na zhizn’ krest’iianki Grudzinskoi,” *LVIA*, f. 688, ap. 8, b. 299; “O nasilii nad evreiami za upotreblenie khristianskoi krovi pri izgotovlenii presnokov na prazdnik ‘Peisakh,’” *LVIA*, f. 688, ap. 6, b. 99; “O pristave 3 uch. gor. Vil’na Viacheslave Vikent’eve Vasilevskom, obv. (po 341 st. Ulozh. o nak.) v nepravil’nom vedenii sudebnogo sledstviia po delu o pokushenii na ubiistvo krest’iianki Grudzinskoi,” *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 348; *LMAVB RS*, f. 155, b. 20.

118 Jewish complaint (no date), *LVIA*, f. 688, ap. 6, b. 99, l. 13; Gessen, “Blondes,” 661–664.

119 Kats, “Der barimter blut-bibl.”

120 Wróblewski’s position was particularly complicated, because among Blondes’s lawyers was his teacher, the famous Polish advocate Vladimir Spasovich: Spasovich’s letters to Wróblewski, *LMAVB RS*, f. 7–1364. Wróblewski would be reminded of his part in this trial later during elections to the First Russian Duma, when he sought support for his candidacy on the “Jewish street”: Staliūnas, “Collaboration of Lithuanians and Jews,” 53.

121 Spiridovich’, *Zapiski Zhandarma*, 13.

122 Report by a policeman of the Sixth Police Circuit in the Vil’na District to the prosecutor of Vil’na Province, March 13, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 688, ap. 6, b. 99, l. 8–9.

matzot.<sup>123</sup> However, this hostility towards Jews did not erupt into mass ethnic violence.

Meanwhile investigators began examining the attack version, bearing in mind a possible ritual motive. Admittedly, certain difficulties arose: the local policeman who found out about the attack at 2:30 a.m. did not report the incident to his superiors until 10 a.m., and after inspecting the scene and finding traces of blood, he did nothing to protect the crime scene.<sup>124</sup> This did not prevent the investigators from bringing charges of attempted murder, especially since Blondes's evidence differed from that of his wife concerning Grudzinska's return from Paberžė. To provide forensic evidence for the charge, a chemical-microscopic analysis of the blood found in Blondes's flat was conducted, which showed that the blood came from a human or another mammal.<sup>125</sup>

The evidence gathered, primarily Grudzinska's accusation, was sufficient for Blondes to be accused of attempting to murder Grudzinska. Even though formally the charge mentioned only the attack on and injuries to Grudzinska, all parties in the trial and members of the public interested in the incident understood that this was a ritual murder case.

Thanks to Maksim Vinaver—a famous Russian Jewish activist and later one of the leaders of the Russian Constitutional Democratic party (Kadets)—an influential Polish lawyer named Vladimir Spasovich (Włodzimierz Spasowicz) and other legal specialists began preparing Blondes's defense.<sup>126</sup> The participation of this Polish lawyer in the case to fight the charges of ritual murder ought to have served to reduce interethnic tensions. The court, which, according to certain sources, comprised mostly Poles, seems to have been unimpressed by this fact.

123 Report by the police superintendent of Vil'na to the prosecutor of Vil'na Province, March 20, 1900, *ibid.*, I. 15–16.

124 File "O pristave 3 uch. gor. Vil'na Viacheslave Vikent'eve Vasilevskom (obv. po 341 st. Ulozh. o nak.) v nepravil'nom vedenii sudebnogo sledstviia po delu o pokushenii na ubiistvo krest'ianki Grudzinskoi," *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 348.

125 Charges against D. Blondes, *LMAVB RS*, f. 155, b. 20, l. 8.

126 Kats, "Der barimter blut-bilbl"; Pozner, "Bor'ba za ravnopravie," 169. Blondes's case encouraged St. Petersburg Jewish intellectuals to form a bureau to defend Jews in court and combat Antisemitism in the wider sense: Krol', *Strannitsy moei zhizni*, 299–308; Gassenschmidt, *Jewish Liberal Politics*, 8–10, 13, 21; Nathans, "The Other Modern Jewish Politics," 27.

The court refused to call experts on the “Jewish Question,” including the aforementioned Khvolson, as witnesses.<sup>127</sup> Thus it is no surprise that in December 1900, the court found Blondes guilty of attacking (and intending to murder) Grudzinska and sentenced him to sixteen months’ imprisonment. This sentence satisfied neither the prosecutor nor the accusing counsel.<sup>128</sup> The Senate permitted the case to be heard again, and the new trial, judged by a Russian named Baturin, found Blondes not guilty in 1902.<sup>129</sup> However, after he was freed, he lost his clients and found it very hard to make a living.<sup>130</sup>

The day after Blondes was declared innocent, Vil’na lawyers, along with one of the local Polish community leaders, Michał Węclawski, arranged a meeting to honor Blondes’s lawyers.<sup>131</sup> This step may be regarded as an expression of solidarity between lawyers, but it was more likely an attempt to reduce tension between the Catholic (primarily Polish) and Jewish communities.

127 *Ha-melits*, October 20, 1900.

128 Historians say that Spasovich doubted whether it was worth submitting an appeal, because the new court might pass an even harsher sentence. Vinaver also took this stance. Only thanks to another lawyer, Oscar Gruzenberg, was a decision taken to consult Blondes himself, who was in favor of appealing to a higher court: Kats, “Der barimter blut-bilbl.”

129 “Delo Blondesa v Senate,” *Novoe vremia* 9024 (1902); “Delo Blondesa,” *Vilenskii vestnik* 24 (1902); “Dnevnik,” *ibid.*, 25 (1902); “Delo Blondesa,” *Severo-zapadnoe slovo* 1141, 1142, 1143, 1144, 1145 (1902); “Za nedeliu,” *Voskhod* 5 (1902): 13, *ibid.*, 6 (1902): 8–9; “Delo Blondesa,” *Budushchnost’* 5 (1902): 87–89; B.G. [?], “Delo Blondesa. (Pis’mo iz Vil’ny),” *ibid.*, 5 (1902): 89; “Posle dela Blondesa,” *ibid.*, 6 (1902): 102; “Delo Blondesa,” *ibid.*, 6 (1902): 105–106; Kats, “Meyn bagegenish.” The Hebrew newspapers *Ha-melits* and *Ha-tsifra* wrote about this trial forty times. The latter, probably seeking to confuse the censor, phrased its reports craftily. It reported some information from the trial as articles that had already appeared in translation in the *Samarkandskaia gazeta*, which in turn had allegedly taken them from the “Odessa press.” However, according to information from the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg, no newspaper was published in Samarkand in Russian in 1902. It is likely that *Ha-tsifra* derived its information from Blondes’s lawyers and did not wish to reveal its sources. In the courts and the Senate, Blondes’s lawyers both stressed the inconsistency and illogical nature of Grudzinska’s account and appealed against court procedure.

130 Ishurin, *Vilne*, 832; Kats, “Meyn bagegenish.”

131 “Delo Blondesa,” *Budushchnost’* 6 (1902): 105–106.



THE MURDER OF A CHILD AT ŠALNAIČIAI,  
NEAR BUIVYDŽIAI (VIL'NA DISTRICT) IN 1908

After lunch on Saturday, March 29, 1908, at Šalnaičiai, near Buivydžiai (Vil'na District), a two-year-old child named Nikodemas Rinkevičius was murdered.<sup>132</sup> The boy's neighbors encountered a dreadful scene: the boy lay in his cot, his throat slit and his "head hanging from the cot with considerable blood both in the cradle and on the ground." The prevailing explanation for this crime was provided by the deceased boy's eight-year-old sister Marija, whom their painter father and mother had left in charge of her brother when they went off to Buivydžiai to work for a certain Jew. According to the girl, that day the Buivydžiai Jewish cobbler Josel Gelbert entered the house, apparently looking for a rake he had left behind, and later on another unknown person came, who was "tall, with a long russet beard, and a long black coat and hat," who approached the cot with a raised knife. Then the girl apparently ran out to call her neighbors.<sup>133</sup>

Rumor of the murder spread swiftly.<sup>134</sup> Quite a "large crowd" gathered near the Rinkevičius home, and "all those in the crowd were very excited and spoke of the event, blaming what had happened at the Rinkevičius house on the Jews, who, according to the crowd, were still using Christian blood for their matzot because the 'Jewish Easter' was nigh."<sup>135</sup> According to another version, they needed blood for "Easter."<sup>136</sup> "The mob's feelings rose and rose." At the same time, plans were made for all different kinds of vigilante justice: some suggested drowning all Jews, while others recommended burning them or stoning them.<sup>137</sup> The official version held that disaster was narrowly averted

132 The press mention another name, Ipolit: "Ubiistvo rebenka," *Severo zapadnyj golos*, April 3, 1908.

133 Top secret report by the governor of Vil'na to the governor general of Vil'na, April 1, 1908, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1908 m., b. 4, l. 10.

134 Officials asserted that the information later reached Vil'na, forty versts away.

135 Top secret report by the governor of Vil'na to the governor general of Vil'na, April 1, 1908, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1908 m., b. 4, l. 10.

136 Report by the Vil'na District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil'na Chamber of Justice, April 16, 1908, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 839, l. 2.

137 Report by the Vil'na District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil'na Chamber of Justice, April 2, 1908, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 905, l. 4.

by one official who happened by and calmed the mob, promising that he would go immediately to Vil'na and report to the governor and take measures to investigate the crime.<sup>138</sup>

Local society soon divided into two camps. Some Catholics blamed the Jews, while the Jews thought the victim's sister was guilty.<sup>139</sup> Some sources mention that initially, the girl alleged the unknown visitor was a Russian and that only later her neighbors and the priest convinced her to blame the Jews.<sup>140</sup> This version seemed worthy of investigation by the officials, because there was blood on Marija's clothing and a knife had disappeared from the house. The third explanation to gain credence held that some madman had committed the crime.<sup>141</sup>

That same evening, peasants near Buivydžiai detained seven Jews, including Josel Gelbert, and took them off to the local policeman's house to "beat the names of the murderers out of them." Despite peasant discontent, the Jews were released and extra policemen were stationed in the town. By the next morning the local authorities arrived in town, and a day later, officials arrived from Vil'na. The excitable peasants were not afraid to tell the governor himself what they thought—they demanded all Jews be expelled from the town and threatened Gelbert with vigilante justice. The governor ordered Gelbert's arrest for his own safety.<sup>142</sup>

Peasant wrath regarding the Jews was further inflamed by news that Marija apparently identified the killer as Khon Viker, whom the

138 Ibid.

139 According to *Severo zapadnyi golos*, this version seemed credible to some peasants as well, because the girl had grown tired of looking after her baby brother: "Ubiistvo rebenka," *Severo zapadnyi golos*, April 3, 1908.

140 Letters from the rabbi of Novo-vileika (Vil'na District), Meir Levin to Daniil Khvolson and Baron David Gintsburg, the day before the beginning of Iyar 1908, *CAHJP, Jerusalem*, Ru. 142.5 [pages unnumbered]. *Vilniaus žinios* also mentions a *burlak* (Russian for boatman): "Šalnaičiai (Viln.gub.). Užmušimas vaikuko Šalnaičiuose [Šalnaičiai (Vilnius Province). Killing of a Child in Šalnaičiai]," *Vilniaus žinios* 88 (1908).

141 Report by the Vil'na District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil'na Chamber of Justice, April 2, 1908, *LVI A*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 905, l. 4; "Z Belarusi i Litvy," *Nasha niva* 8 (1908): 6.

142 Top secret report by the governor of Vil'na to the governor general of Vil'na, April 1, 1908, *LVI A*, f. 378, ps, 1908 m., b. 4, l. 10–11.

police had already arrested.<sup>143</sup> In Christian minds this incident seemed to confirm suspicions concerning the “Jewish footprint” in the case. Only a few days after the murder, market day arrived in the nearby small town Bistryčia, when many people gathered in the town. “Agitators” appeared in the crowd, shouting that Jews had killed a child and so ought to be beaten. Many local Jews had taken refuge after hearing rumors, which spread before market day, of a possible pogrom.<sup>144</sup> However, these rumors apparently had not reached other places, and so the hatters Iosel and Khaim Reznik came to town from Vorniany (Varniany). A stick-waving mob chased them, but the Rezniks managed to take refuge in the policeman’s house. After this the mob attacked Jewish houses and shops near the market square and smashed windows. Later they headed to the area known as the “Colony,” where Jewish laborers lived. Here they also smashed windows.<sup>145</sup> Two Jewish witnesses said that one peasant woman threw a Torah out of the synagogue and trampled on it, and then several other rioters tore up Jewish books. All the victims asserted that the mob “only smashed windows but did not attack people or steal property.”<sup>146</sup>

Based on the material at hand, it seems that peasant reaction to news of the alleged murder of a boy by Jews was spontaneous, and there is no information that it was incited, for example, by educated society. Admittedly, on March 31, after the governor arrived in Buivydžiai, the local priest was among the crowd, but there is no evidence of any clerical involvement in this case.<sup>147</sup> The press in various languages usually reported events neutrally, and some newspapers reprinted

143 Ibid., l. 14. The rabbi of Novo-vileika asserted that Viker had thirty witnesses to confirm that he did not leave home that day: letters from the rabbi of Novo-vileika (Vil’na District), Meir Levin to D. Khvolson and Baron David Gintsburg, the day before the beginning of Iyar 1908, *CAHJP*, Ru. 142.5 [pages unnumbered].

144 The rabbi of Novo-vileika notes fear among Jews in surrounding villages: *ibid.*

145 “Pogromnye strakhi v Vilenskoi gub.,” *Evreiskie izvestiia* 17 (1908).

146 Report by the Vil’na District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil’na Chamber of Justice, April 16, 1908, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 839, l. 2.

147 Top secret report by the governor of Vil’na to the governor general of Vil’na, April 1, 1908, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1908 m., b. 4, l. 10.

accounts from other similar publications.<sup>148</sup> The press reports of certain events even suggest that publishers made special efforts not to encourage Judeophobic sentiment. Thus the account of the boy's murder in *Vilniaus žinios* (Vilnius News) and the girl's version as reported did not mention that the suspect was a Jew.<sup>149</sup> In other words, the press in this case did not contribute to the spread of Judeophobic sentiment.

The governor of Vil'na asserted that the police halted the mob's frenzy,<sup>150</sup> but this claim is doubtful. Descriptions of the pogrom make clear that no one stopped the mob from rampaging in the market square and then smashing windows in the "Colony."

Unquestionably, the local authorities' main concern overall in this case was to prevent possible mass outbreaks of violence. The recent 1905 Revolution forced officials to be more careful in situations where mass disturbances might erupt. Thus during these incidents, not only were police units increased but also the governor himself paid two visits to the locality to talk to peasants and attempt to calm them down.<sup>151</sup> Jews suspected of having committed a crime, as noted above, had to be arrested for their own safety. The arrested Jews, Gelbert and Viker,<sup>152</sup> were released, and seven of the seventeen arrested Christian violators were sentenced to jail for between two weeks and one month.<sup>153</sup> At the same time, the attempt to halt peasant vigilante justice and maintain public order does not necessarily mean that no local officials believed the blood libel. Thus during investigations into the murder of the Rinkevičius boy, the prosecutor in the Vil'na Chamber of Justice

148 "Vilniaus gubernijos kalėjiman [To the Prison of Vil'na Province]," *Vilniaus žinios* 80 (1908); "Šalnaičiai (Viln.gub.). Užmušimas vaikiuko [Šalnaičiai in Vilnius Province: Killing a Child]"; "Buivydžiai (Vilniaus pav.)," *ibid.*, 97 (1908); "Kūdikio papiovimas [Slaughtering a Baby]," *Viltis* 41 (1908); "Iš Lietuvos [From Lithuania]," *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 5 (1909): 46; "Z Belarusi i Litvy." For more on how the press reported the Buivydžiai case, see Sirutavičius, "Kai prietarai tampa prievarta," 111–115.

149 "Kūdikio papiovimas."

150 Top secret report by the governor of Vil'na to the governor general of Vil'na, April 5, 1908, *LVA*, f. 378, ps, 1908 m., b. 4, l. 14.

151 On another occasion the governor visited Vorniany and Ostrovets on market day: *ibid.*

152 Copy of the resolution of the Vil'na Chamber of Justice, January 23, 1909, *LVA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 905, l. 19.

153 Report by the Vil'na District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil'na Chamber of Justice, January 12, 1910, *LVA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 839, l. 4.

approached the Justice Ministry to ask Professor Troitskii of the St. Petersburg Orthodox Spiritual Academy, in his capacity as an expert witness, whether there really were cruelly fanatic (*izuvercheskie*) Jewish sects that used Christian blood in their rituals.<sup>154</sup>

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Thus the finding of a child's body<sup>155</sup> or even the disappearance of children often created fertile soil in Lithuanian Christian society for tales of "the Jewish footprint," which was accepted by most peasants and, during the events of 1900, part of the Vil'na Christian community too. In several cases (in 1814, 1827, and 1908) such an explanation was raised by minors who were the Jews' main accusers. However, in these cases there was evidence that their elders had coached such young people to blame the Jews. Even so, it is likely that children in Lithuanian villages were frightened from birth that if they behaved badly, they would end up "in Jewish matzot."

It was particularly likely that Jews would be accused of ritual murder when a child disappeared or was found dead during Easter. In five of the cases analyzed here, such misfortunes were associated with either Easter or Passover (in 1801, 1827, 1861,<sup>156</sup> 1892, and 1908), feasts that were often close to each other. Once, in Vil'na in 1900, such an event was associated with Purim (but even in that case, a mob believed that the Jews had most likely wished to obtain Christian blood for matzot). Certainly one of the reasons why this happened in this period was a belief widespread among Christians in Europe that during Passover or Easter, Jews re-enacted Christ's Passion by choosing a Christian as their victim. But beyond that, as will be shown below, in Lithuania the Easter festival was a period when special efforts were made by clergy to stress the difference between Christians and Jews. One of these rituals that underlined hostility towards Jews was the re-enactment of the Passion that commonly took place in Samogitia, in which some parishioners would dress up as Roman soldiers and Jews to create mischief

154 Report by the prosecutor, Vil'na Chamber of Justice to the minister of justice, August 26, 1908, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 905, l. 10.

155 Sometimes the disappearance of an adult could become a pretext for the blood libel, as in the 1892 case described above.

156 Even though the child disappeared and was found much earlier than Easter, which that year fell on April 23.

in church and shoot guns. Those dressed up as Jews would attempt to steal the cross, guarded by those playing Roman soldiers. The weapons of the “Jews”—wooden pliers, whips, and nails—symbolized the instruments of Christ’s Passion. On Easter morning the play-acting was somewhat different: the “Jews” would head in the opposite direction as the official procession and make a commotion.<sup>157</sup> Christians were thus reminded of their belief that the Jews inflicted suffering on Christ. As a consequence, during the Easter festivities, anti-Jewish sentiment intensified markedly.

The cases of blood libel investigated here and others (at Konstantinovo, Ponevezh District in 1900, or Vieksniai, Shavli District, 1907, which are discussed in Chapters Three and Four) usually took place in northern Lithuania, especially in Shavli District. The superstition undoubtedly had deep roots in this region. However, such accusations were made in other parts of Lithuania as well, for instance, during the 1886 pogrom in Dolginovo (Vil’na Province), events at Vil’na (1900), Bistryčia (1908), and the incident in Svetsianys District in 1896.<sup>158</sup>

Information spread very quickly in a given place or area. In the 1801 case, one witness told how she had heard about the murder of a child from someone who had received the information from someone else.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, it is significant that information spread farther than a small area (echoes of the Blondes case in 1900 reached as far as northern Lithuania; rumors concerning the 1908 incident reached Vil’na) but became inscribed in popular memory for a long time. A case from the end of the eighteenth century was recalled in Šiaulėnai in 1861, and in 1913 *Rygos garsas* reported on the Blondes case of 1900–1902. In other words, the superstition was socially significant—part of Christian society remembered it for a long time.

157 Anglickienė, *Kitataučių įvaizdis*, 94–96; Skrodenis, *Folkloras ir gyvenimas*, 345.

158 Not much information on this is available from Augustovo, and later Suvalki Province, but it may well be that such a situation was associated with the circumstance, whereas much less archival material has survived from this province and the Kingdom of Poland in general. Żyndul’s work also seems to indicate that there were no such incidents in Suvalki Province: Żyndul, *Kłamstwo krwi*, see the cartographic inserts between pages 84 and 85 and pages 166 and 167. Even so, memoirs note that this superstition did exist there: Agota Savickienė, *Atsiminimai* [Memoirs], *LIIBR EA* 1047, l. 152.

159 Extract from the file, *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 6, b. 1071, l. 48.

The local social and intellectual elite played an important role in such accusations, especially in the nineteenth century. There are considerable indications that in 1827, the landowner Dimša inspired the accusations and that in 1861, the estate manager Grudzinskis blamed Jews. In 1861 and 1908 Jews blamed the priest for instigating the mob, while in 1900 they accused educated Polish society. As part of educated society joined in accusations of ritual murder against Jews, they added historical arguments to these charges. In the 1827 case, an alleged incident of ritual murder in Poland in 1774 was recalled, and the anti-semitic book *Złość żydowska*, familiar to Lithuanian intellectuals, was entered as evidence in the court case.<sup>160</sup> In 1892 the newspaper *Žemaičių ir Lietuvos apžvalga* caused the superstition to spread.

When the accusers included converts from Judaism to Christianity, or actual Jews, it usually added considerable power to the superstition.<sup>161</sup> In 1827 several converts claimed to have heard that at Easter, Jews required Christian blood. The 1861 accusation, as we have seen, was supported by the disreputable Itsikson. The 1892 case involved a Jewish woman who allegedly intended to convert to Catholicism.

However, alongside characteristics shared by many of the cases discussed here, we can see changes in public reaction to expressions of this superstition.

Changes can be seen in the behavior of Christians and Jews alike. Of course, each case was unique, and the eras differed, as did the size and other parameters of the societies affected by the libel, but certain common tendencies may be seen. For Jews the main instrument of defense throughout the nineteenth century was appeals or complaints to the authorities. On several occasions Jewish community representatives, like their opponents, attempted to use arguments from history: they would appeal to the resolutions of Polish kings and the imperial decree of 1817.<sup>162</sup> In 1861 and 1900, attempts were made to exploit political arguments: allegedly loyal Jews were accused of nonexistent

160 Moravskis, *Nuo Merkinės iki Kauno*, 382.

161 As quite often happened in other cases of blood libel: Gessen, *Velizhskaia drama*, 98; Kats, “Der barimter blut-bilbl”; Schultz, “The Blood Libel,” 290; Schainker, “Imperial Hybrids,” 294.

162 Material collected by the Tel’shi Castle Court, July 26, 1828, *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 6, b. 1086, l. 484; F. Katsen’s request, May 27, 1827, *LVIA*, f. 443, ap. 6, b. 1071, l. 63; M. Kaplan’s complaint sent to the grand duke Konstantin Pavlovich, July 26, 1829, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1827 m., b. 826, l. 274.

crimes by Polish rebels. Meanwhile the behavior of specific Jewish communities was different. In 1801 Jews did not feel they stood on a lower rung in the informal ethnic hierarchy. Shlomovich simply refused to allow the peasants to inspect his tavern; local Jews were not frightened of peasants and showed that they would not accept such accusations being made against them. Admittedly, in 1861 the peasants and officials did carry out searches of Jewish houses. The mob did as it wished in Aleksandrovsk in 1892, and in 1900 mobs stormed into Blondes's home, to say nothing of the 1908 pogrom. In other words, Christian aggression escalated as Christians became ever more confident that they had a right to punish Jews for perceived injuries. Granted, this does not mean that Jewish acceptance of such behavior increased accordingly. Indeed, in 1908 Jews did go into hiding, but it should be remembered that the Jewish community in Bistryčia was small.<sup>163</sup> In 1892 Jews attempted to deal with their assailants on their own, while in 1900 a group of Jews tried to rescue Blondes from the mob, carrying him off to the police station.<sup>164</sup> Thus we can see a tendency, albeit not a very clear one, for Jews to be less and less inclined to accept the wanton behavior of some elements of Christian society.

The events of 1886, 1892, and 1908 differed from all the other accusations thus far discussed here in detail, because in these cases, antipathy towards Jews developed into a pogrom. Some physical force was used in earlier cases, too. In 1801 a few Christians and Jews exchanged angry words and jostled one another; in 1827 stones were thrown at passing Jews; in 1861 Jewish complaints even referred to casualties, even though there probably were none; and in Vil'na in 1900 there was at least one minor assault on Jews. However, none of these incidents escalated into mass violence.

One important factor affecting events in Bistryčia was the recent 1905 Revolution, which affected Vorniany Rural District near Bistryčia (where a pogrom was expected in 1908, too). In this district the school master and local authorities were replaced by local people

163 According to the available data, they numbered twenty to thirty persons: Report by the Vil'na District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil'na Chamber of Justice, April 2, 1908, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 905, l. 4. Meanwhile, the account of the pogrom states that in the "Colony" alone, the windows of thirty Jewish homes were smashed: Report by the Vil'na District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil'na Chamber of Justice, April 16, 1908, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 839, l. 2.

164 Charges against D. Blondes, *LMAVB RS*, f. 155, b. 20, l. 5.



during the revolution.<sup>165</sup> Thus the imperial authorities in this neighborhood did not enjoy public confidence, and the peasantry had experience in taking power into its own hands. After being mobilized for common action in 1905, the peasants found it easier to join together for collective action in 1908. However, this explanation of events does not tell the full story. Suspicions that Jews had committed a ritual murder arose in Vieکشniai in 1907, but peasant discontent did not grow into mass violence. Moreover, we should be cautious about associating the peasant movement in 1905 with any kind of nationalism. Bistryčia was on the border between Lithuanian and Slav ethnic territories and far away from the epicenters of the Lithuanian and Polish national movements.

A second factor that likely drove peasants to violence in 1908 was the appearance of the dead child. The slit throat and “head hanging out of the cot” may have excited even completely unlively imaginations and led people to carry out vigilante actions. Meanwhile in Vieکشniai there was only a rumor that a Jew had murdered a Christian girl; there was no body, and no one had disappeared there.

In seeking to explain the exceptional nature of the 1886, 1892, and 1908 cases, we must note that these incidents took place in an era that began in 1881, when pogroms became a widespread phenomenon that was known about not only from rumor but also from a wealth of press reports. Thus mob law with regard to Jews had become commonplace. At the same time, such an explanation by itself is insufficient, because in 1900 events in Vil’na did not end in a pogrom.

At the same time, an important role in this story was played by the authorities, including members of the local social elite who held various positions within the local government. During all these incidents local officials (those whose actions were seen by ordinary people), or at least some of them, were clearly on the side of the accusers, and the antipathy some of them felt towards Jews is not in doubt. Let us remember that in 1827 Jews were humiliated by being locked up the whole day in the manor house yard, waiting to be questioned, and even if their hair and *payot* (sidelocks) were not in fact cut, threats to shave them were made. Furthermore, in Šiaulėnai in 1861 a “peasant mob” took part in a search of Jewish homes. In 1900 the mob forced its way into the Blondes family’s flat and beat them up before dragging

165 Tyla, *1905 metų revoliucija*, 230, 237.

Blondes off to the police station. A policeman even asked Mrs. Blondes, "Where is the blood your husband hid away to make matzot?"<sup>166</sup> Meanwhile, officials did not express clear support for the accusations made against Jews in 1886, 1892, and 1908. In 1908, peasants detained several Jews, but the local authorities soon released them. Two Jews were arrested, but this was for their own safety. While in earlier cases part of the Christian population could hope that the authorities would carry out justice as the peasants saw it, in 1892, as in 1908, they most likely no longer entertained such illusions. Peasants thought they had no choice but to take action themselves. Thus in the nineteenth century, for a long time, at least some of the imperial authorities abetted the functioning of the blood libel in Lithuanian Christian society in one way or another, although they were in no way the driving force behind this superstition. The authorities' position gave ordinary people the hope that their version of justice would be done and that there was no need for mob rule. In the late imperial period, when the authorities began to look more rationally at cases of blood libel, part of Christian society in Lithuania, which still believed in blood libel, felt they had been hurt by Jews and that the authorities would do nothing about it, and that they therefore had to take action themselves.

166 S. Blondes's request sent to the minister of justice (no date), *LVIA*, f. 688, ap. 6, b. 99, l. 27.



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## Antisemitism in Lithuania

With Antisemitism, as with other ideologies or political movements, there is no definition on which all or most researchers agree. Most often, arguments arise over several problems: what is the relationship between the ancient and the modern hatred of Jews, what are the reasons for the rise of modern Antisemitism, and should all forms of antipathy towards Jews be treated as Antisemitism?

Modern researchers are inclined to separate ancient and modern antipathy towards Jews, even though in some respects a certain continuity cannot be denied.<sup>1</sup> A new term, “Antisemitism,” appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century, which shows that a new phenomenon had formed that previous terminology was no longer able to define. At the same time, there are more serious arguments that distinguish between the old mostly religious, and in part economic, antipathy towards Jews and more “scientific,” racially argued hatred. Some researchers regard direct action and politicization as the distinctive qualities of modern Antisemitism.<sup>2</sup> The first quality is connected with reaction to Jewish emancipation and a belief in universal Jewish power, something not encountered in earlier expressions of antipathy towards Jews. At the same time, traditional anti-Jewish stereotypes have not disappeared and make this imagined rise of the Jews unacceptable to part of Gentile society. Antisemites believe they must fight against the rise of the Jews consistently and with determination. Determined action requires political institutions such as parties, movements, newspapers, and so on, which began to emerge in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century.

Of all the explanations for the rise of Antisemitism (modernization, scapegoating, reaction to a strong state, the influence of political culture), modernization is mentioned most often. This explanation holds that economic modernization and Jewish emancipation strengthened

1 Bergmann, *Geschichte des Antisemitismus*, 7.

2 Lindemann and Levy, “Conclusion,” 251–255.

competition between Jews and Gentiles and thereby provided fertile ground for the development of a new ideology. At the same time, however, many researchers reject monocausalization.<sup>3</sup>

The third problem in analyzing Antisemitism is no less complicated. Michael R. Marrus's proposed solution was to differentiate between levels of intensity of antipathy towards Jews. To this end he introduced a model of three concentric rings. Vague, consistent antipathy to Jews, which might be termed latent, lies in the outer ring. In the second ring are expressions of more intense and, importantly, changing antipathy, which become particularly significant during moments of crisis. In the center ring is fanatical Antisemitism, which may influence the first two rings.<sup>4</sup> Scholars criticize Marrus's model, because it does not define the boundaries between such rings.<sup>5</sup> However, it does allow us to differentiate between expressions of antipathy towards Jews and avoid simplified assessments whereby any collective criticism of Jews and separation from them is treated as Antisemitism. This approach also allows us to explain the dynamics of the rise in Antisemitism during certain crisis situations.

In this study we shall define as "real" Antisemitism, if we may so term it, those views that attribute certain negative qualities to *all* Jews and regard Jews as irredeemably "corrupt" and causing incorrigible harm to those around them. Moreover, extreme Antisemitism presupposes systematic politicization—direct, long-term action, or at least agitation to act against Jews, as antisemites perceive them to be acquiring a terrifying degree of power. This was supposed to lead to the institutionalization of antisemitic parties, associations, newspapers, and clubs. Racist theories are not necessarily part of the modern antisemitic ideology. As Rudolf Jaworski has noted, unlike in Western Europe, racist theories were not required in the eastern part of the continent for the generation of Antisemitism. In Eastern Europe, Jews were readily recognizable because of their large numbers and weak degree of assimilation or acculturation.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, not all expressions of anti-Jewish feelings should be classified as Antisemitism. For example, it is

3 For more on all these theories, see Brustein, *Roots of Hate*, 35–43.

4 Marrus, "The Theory and Practice," 38–42.

5 Lindemann, *Esau's Tears*, 26.

6 Jaworski, "Voraussetzungen und Funktionsweisen," 35–36. Kai Struve came to a very similar conclusion when analyzing the image of Jews among Ruthenians and Poles in Galicia: Struve, *Bauern und Nation*, 392.

unlikely that the mere classification of Jews as competitors and the appeal to Christians to band together to become more established in business can be considered Antisemitism. The already difficult-to-define line between the protection of one's own interests and Antisemitism should be drawn based not so much on isolated quotes as on the general orientation of a given publication or movement.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Antisemitism had not penetrated all European countries to the same extent. Some Lithuanian activists had become acquainted with modern antisemitic theories and even attempted to spread them in Lithuania.<sup>7</sup> However, here, as in other countries, the popularity of antisemitic ideas was determined not only by the presence (or absence) of those propagating this ideology but also by many other social, economic, cultural, and political circumstances.

This chapter discusses dominant religious, moral, economic, cultural, and political anti-Jewish topics in Lithuanian, Polish, and Belarusian discourses, along with their public reception.

#### ANTI-JUDAISM

Of all the aforementioned themes, religious Judeophobia is the oldest in Lithuanian discourse. As stated in the previous chapter, blood libel accusations were spread in Lithuania in the age of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and in the nineteenth century alike.

Probably the most radical and undoubtedly the best-known example of Lithuanian religious Judeophobia in the late imperial period is Justinas Bonaventūra Pranaitis and his book *Christianus in Talmude Iudaeorum, sive, Rabbinicae doctrinae de christianis secreta* (The Talmud Unmasked: The Secret Rabbinical Teachings Concerning Christians),

7 Here we rely on an analysis of primary sources, albeit also with attention to some earlier studies: Berenis, "XIX a. nacionalinis judėjimas," 99–106; Berenis, "Bažnyčia ir Lietuvos žydai," 61–68; Truska, *Lietuviai ir žydai*; Truska and Vareikis, *Holokausto prielaidos*; Vareikis, "Tarp Valančiaus ir Kudirkos," 79–96; Venclauskas, "Moderniojo Lietuviško antisemitizmo genezė ir raida"; Sirutavičius, "Lietuvos žydų bendruomenės," 69–77; Sirutavičius, "Kościół katolicki," 614–620; Ūdrėnas, *Book, Bread, Cross, and Whip*, 351–356; Zalkin, "Antisemitism in Lithuania," 135–170; Richter, "Kišinev or Linkuva?" 117–130; Richter, "Antisemitismus und die litauische Intelligenzija," 89–114; Richter, *Antisemitism*.

first published in Latin in 1892, and later translated into many other languages (German, Russian, Italian, and Polish), as well as Lithuanian.<sup>8</sup> Pranaitis accused the Jews of all manner of wrongdoing and a contempt for Christianity; for this he blamed the Talmud, which he said permitted Jews to kill Christians. However, texts of such radical anti-Judaic content were rarely published in Lithuanian. In addition, the fact that Pranaitis first released his book in Latin suggests that he likely considered his book an academic work with no direct links to any specific social situation. Equally important is the fact that this work appeared in Lithuanian twenty years after its first release, which would also suggest that there was no special “need” for such books in Lithuanian society for a long time.<sup>9</sup> Sometimes similar works were simply translations from other languages.<sup>10</sup> Such texts usually appeared as separate books. Although Pranaitis’s book was well received even in the Lithuanian liberal press,<sup>11</sup> it is likely that the editorial staff of Lithuanian newspapers, even those of a clerical bent, did not find radical religious Judeophobia acceptable. This hypothesis would also be confirmed by the fact that J.B. Pranaitis frequently published his texts in the Polish antisemitic newspaper *Rola*.<sup>12</sup>

One particular case in the late imperial period highlighted the different attitudes of the Lithuanian press concerning anti-Judaism. In

8 Pranaitis, *Krikščionis žydų talmude*. J.B. Pranaitis himself alleged that this publication provoked great dissatisfaction among the Jews. It is true that some of them believed the author to be Professor Pranciškus Karevičius of the St. Petersburg Catholic Academy: J.B. Pranaitis’s letter dated March 25, 1894, to A. Dambrauskas, *VUB RS*, F1 D309, letter no. 3 (pages unnumbered). Incidentally, in this letter J.B. Pranaitis also makes negative comments about Jews, giving them an unpleasant description (“stinkers”).

9 That publication in Lithuanian might be related to the Beilis case (see Chapter One), where Pranaitis served as an expert. There is no information on any attempt to publish it earlier.

10 Grušeckis, *Talmudas žydų*.

11 Kelmelis, “Ko galime tikėtis nuo naujojo caro Mikalojaus II? [What Can We Expect from the New Tsar Nikolai II?],” *Ūkininkas* 14 (1895).

12 The most attention in these texts was given to the discussion about the Polish-language Jewish newspaper, *Izraelita*, that approved of Jewish integration into Polish society. When defending his book’s depiction of Christians in the Talmud, Pranaitis continued to focus on his claims about the Talmud encouraging Jewish intolerance of Christians: Ks. J.B. Pranajtis, “Z tajemnic talmudicznych (Odpowiedź na odpowiedź),” *Rola* 12 (1892): 177–179; Ks. J.B. Pranajtis, “Wyjaśnienie artykułu ‘Izraelity’ p. t. ‘W formie książki,’” *Rola* 3

1911 in Ukraine, Menahem Mendel Beilis, a Jew, was accused of murdering Andrei Iushchinskii.<sup>13</sup> The prosecutors alleged that the crime was carried out for religious purposes, in other words, that Beilis needed Christian blood in order to conduct religious rituals. The 1913 trial was closely followed by the main Lithuanian publications. The case was reported in detail in the many languages of the Romanov Empire's periodicals, and it attracted particular interest in the Lithuanian press, because one of the prosecution's experts was Pranaitis, who asserted that Jewish religious literature did in fact condone the use of Christian blood for religious purposes. The liberal Lithuanian press (*Lietuvos ūkininkas* [Lithuanian Farmer] and *Lietuvos žinios* [Lithuanian News]) condemned both the trial process, which, in their view, was organized by the government, and Pranaitis for spreading such medieval prejudices.<sup>14</sup> The nationalists' *Viltis* (Hope) avoided taking a stance. However, the clerical press defended Pranaitis and, albeit indirectly, welcomed the accusation and cited the process itself to support the claim that the Jews already controlled all the publications in the world.<sup>15</sup> The silence of *Viltis* in this case was not coincidental. According to the Lithuanian public activist Povilas Matulionis, he and the editor-in-chief, Antanas Smetona, discussed this issue and decided

(1893): 39–40; 4 (1893): 55–56; 5 (1893): 71–72; 6 (1893): 87–88; Ks. J.B. Pranaitis, "Judaica. Ciekawa historia 'spalonego obrazka,' czyli szlachetny cel i szlachetnie środki," *Rola* 17 (1894): 275–276, and nos. 18, 19, 20, 25, and 26; Ks. J.B. Pranaitis, "W sprawie rewelacyj ex-masońskich," *Rola* 48 (1896): 770–772; 82 (1896): 851–853. The publisher of this newspaper was one of the main proponents of Polish clerical Antisemitism, Jan Jeleński: Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism*, 68–70; Moszyński, "A Quarter of a Century of Struggle."

13 Klier, "Cry Bloody Murder," 213–229.

14 J. Bkp. [Jurgis Šaulys?], "Kun. Pranaitis ir jo kvalifikacijos eksperto rolė [Priest Pranaitis and His Qualification as an Expert]," *Lietuvos žinios* 118 (1913); Petras Leonas, "Žydo Beilio byla ir kunigo Pranaičio niektikėjimas [The Trial of a Jew Beilis and Priest Pranaitis's False Belief]," *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 45 (1913): 462–463; Petras Leonas, "Kunigo Pranaičio niektikėjimas [Priest Pranaitis's False Belief]," *ibid.* 46 (1913): 474–476.

15 "Žydo Beilio byla [The Trial of a Jew Beilis]," *Aušra* 22 (1913): 344–345; "Garsiai bylai pasibaigus [After an Infamous Trial Ended]," *Rygos garsas* 84 (1913); Plunksnius [?], "Žydų galybė [Jewish Power]," *Šaltinis* 42 (1913): 641–642; "Bylos atbalsiai [Reverberations from the Trial]," *ibid.* 42 (1913); Pranas Dovydaitis, "Keli žodžiai apie kun. Pranaičį, žydiją ir 'pirmėviją' [Some Words on Priest Pranaitis, Jews, and 'Progressists']," *ibid.* 47 (1913): 740–742.



that although Lithuanians were “sick and tired” of Jews, there was no need to support “barbaric outbursts,” especially since Jews would “depart from Lithuania when we [Lithuanians] have made cultural progress.”<sup>16</sup> Thus the silence of *Viltis* was determined by disapproval of radical anti-Jewish measures,<sup>17</sup> as well as by the view that Jews were Lithuanians’ rivals and not worth supporting.

According to the contemporary commentator Michał Römer (Mykolas Römeris), the Polish press was usually silent on such matters and restricted itself to brief reports, because it feared condemning anti-Jewish outbreaks, as this would be unpopular among a public influenced by anti-Jewish sentiments.<sup>18</sup> For example, the Polish press, such as *Gazeta Codzienna* in Vil’na, claimed that no case of blood libel had been proved or disproved by that point. But according to the newspaper, what was most important was the fact that such accusations could be leveled only at uncultured nations.<sup>19</sup> In other words, Jews themselves were to blame for being accused of such dreadful crimes.

Although Lithuanian periodicals featured few examples of sophisticated reasoning for the possible religious roots of evil Jewish behavior, various writings often publicized stories purporting to illustrate Jewish disrespect for Christianity. The most common type of story claimed that Jews were engaging in inappropriate behavior near one Catholic church or another: in Višakio Rūda, “during the blessing in the church, those Jewish bastards would always loiter around the square, always peering in through the entrance with their greasy noses, and wait for the people who would start to leave the church,” and as soon as they were outside, they would immediately start to haggle their wares.<sup>20</sup> In Tryškiai a Jew was said to have started trading near the church. Demonstrating—so the story went—that Jews showed no respect for Catholic processions, “he relieved himself right there, as is usually the case with Jews.”<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, in Šakiai, near the church,

16 Povilas Matulionis, “Kaip lietuviai spietėsi Vilniuje [How Lithuanians Were Gathering in Vilnius],” *VUB RS*, F1–E186, l. 5.

17 When writing this recollection of events, Matulionis mistakenly thought that there were pogroms in Ukraine in 1913.

18 M. Römer, diary, entry of September 25 (October 8), 1913, *LMAVB RS*, F. 138–221, l. 271.

19 “Wokoło procesu,” *Gazeta Codzienna* 254 (1913).

20 Jau ženotas iš Skriaudžių [?], “Viszakio-Ruda,” *Ūkininkas* 12 (1893): 94–95.

21 Kurmis iš K. sodos [?], “Iš Tryszkių [From Tryškiai],” *Tėvynės sargas* 10 (1899).

Jews allegedly set up their outhouse, which emitted the most terrible stench.<sup>22</sup> The volume of such descriptions of everyday behavior lent a seeming weight to the claims of educated antisemites about Jews' disrespect for Christianity.

The accusation that Jews morally corrupted their surrounding inhabitants, primarily the peasantry, was closely related to anti-Judaism. In late-nineteenth-century publications of all ideological streams (e.g., *Aušra* [Dawn], *Ūkininkas* [Farmer], and *Tėvynės sargas* [Fatherland Guard]), and after the 1905 Revolution in the clerical press (e.g., *Šaltinis* [Source]), there were often articles claiming to report actual events that illustrated just how Jews were seeking to morally corrupt the peasantry: "Wherever a Jew appears, there immediately follows a decline in faith, goodness, and national consciousness—in other words, moral corruption grows."<sup>23</sup> This Jewish aim to spread moral corruption is sometimes directly attributed to the Talmud.<sup>24</sup> In addition, there would sometimes be other, pragmatic reasons, when Jews allegedly made peasants drunk, or forcing them to steal, as that way the people would be more likely to spend their money, naturally, in inns, and Jews would soon profit from this.<sup>25</sup> Thus in Valančius's work of fiction, as in the illegal Lithuanian press of the late nineteenth century, the peasants were often warned to take care around Jews, not only because they would be tricked, but also because of the Jews' alleged aims to morally corrupt those around them.

#### ECONOMIC COMPETITION

In the second half of the nineteenth century, major economic and social changes took place in Lithuania. New circumstances made some Lithuanians see Jews no longer as mere intermediaries but as competitors.

22 Cilvakas [?], "Šakiai," *Vilniaus žinios* 100 (1905).

23 Mokytojas G. Taučius [?], "Izraeliaus valdžioje [Under the Power of Israel]," *Šaltinis* 47 (1912).

24 Kušeliauskas, *Talmudas žydy*.

25 Eketis [J. Jazbutis?], "Mauszos aimana [Moaning of Moyshe]," *Tėvynės sargas* 8 (1898): 8–10; v.k. [Vincas Kudirka], "Žinios iš Lietuvos [News from Lithuania]," *Ūkininkas* 2 (1890): 29–30; An. St. [Antanas Staugaitis], "Prie žydų klausimo [On the Jewish Question]," *Lietuvių laikraštis* 44–45 (1905).

As mentioned earlier, one of the alleged reasons that Jews sought to morally corrupt the peasantry was to profit from others. And it is precisely economic arguments that are most often mentioned in anti-semitic texts. The palette of economic antisemitism can be divided into several categories: Jews as exploiters of Lithuanians; Jews as dishonest in trade; and urging Lithuanians to engage in trade and crafts themselves, boycott Jewish stores, and buy only from “their own kind.” In truth, all these accusations against Jews were not a Lithuanian invention; they were widespread in all kinds of anti-Jewish literature in other countries as well. The significance and frequency of such arguments varied in Lithuanian newspaper articles representing the different ideological streams.

*The Jew as an exploiter.* This theme appeared in Lithuanian publications of the earlier periods,<sup>26</sup> in the first illegal Lithuanian newspaper *Aušra* (1883–1886),<sup>27</sup> and later, at the very end of the nineteenth century—both in the clerical and liberal press. After the 1905 Revolution, the theme was prevalent in the clerical publication *Šaltinis*.<sup>28</sup> The image of the Jew as a trader exploiting the peasantry, a moneylender, or innkeeper was easily understood in the agrarian society. There a farmer’s work was valued most, while profits earned from trade, lending, or similar activities—that is, those earned without hard physical labor—were viewed as undeserved. Epithets commonly used to describe Jews—bloodsuckers, leeches, fleas, ticks, spiders waiting to trap flies (peasants) in their web—arose precisely from that contrast drawn between the honest, but hard, work of a farmer and the devious, easy activities of a middleman. It would also sometimes be noted that the Jews were a wealthy people.<sup>29</sup>

26 Vareikis, “Antisemitizmas Lietuvoje,” 23.

27 In truth, Linas Venclauskas was right that little attention was given to the Jewish topic in *Aušra*, because in the publishers’ view, Lithuania was first and foremost a “cultural and language phenomenon” (Venclauskas, “Moderniojo lietuviško antisemitizmo genezė ir raida,” 24). In other words, the publishers of the first illegal newspaper were primarily oriented towards the cultural needs of the modern Lithuanian nation, and in this context, the Jewish factor was unimportant.

28 J.A. [Juozas Adomaitis], “Mokintis reikia [There is a Need For Learning],” *Ūkininkas* 6 (1891): 242–247; Pašeimenis [Bronius Prapuolenis], “Iš jų vaisių pažįsti juos [You Will Recognize Them by Their Fruits],” *Šaltinis* 18 (1906): 274–275.

29 A. Domeika, “Savęs gailėkimės [We Should Feel Sorrow for Ourselves],” *Šaltinis* 36 (1906): 562–564.

*The Jew as a swindler.* Even though stories would sometimes appear in Lithuanian publications where the Lithuanian was cleverer than the Jew, the opposite case was more dominant.<sup>30</sup> The Samogitian Bishop Valančius (mentioned in Chapter One), in his *Paaugusių žmonių knygelė* (Book for Adults), warned the peasantry that all types of work that Jews engaged in were done dismissively, without a care for quality, and only for profit. In any cooperative efforts or friendships, asserted the bishop, “in the end, the Jew always cheats the other person.”<sup>31</sup> Jews were often accused of tampering with products—mixing good products with various cast-offs; putting cheap goods in the packaging from expensive products; selling factory cast-offs as quality goods; and cheating in the measurement of goods (usually when weighing):<sup>32</sup> “The adulteration of various products has become so widespread today that you cannot know what you’re eating, or drinking, or sowing, or what fertilizer you’re using for the fields. You buy wine, and get water mixed with who knows what; you buy bread, and Jews think of what to mix in so that it weighs more but needs less flour; you buy fertilizer and get some kind of dirt; you buy medicine, and even here the Jew has mixed something in.”<sup>33</sup>

Such stories were published in the Lithuanian press to discourage peasants from buying from Jewish stores. However, few trading places were Christian-owned, so the next step was to encourage peasants to start businesses themselves.

*The encouragement of entrepreneurship among Lithuanians and Poles, as well as national solidarity in business.* As Vygantas Vareikis has noted, even the first author of Lithuania’s history in Lithuanian, Simonas Daukantas, urged Lithuanians to oppose Jewish domination in business and to take up trading themselves.<sup>34</sup> The Lithuanian press,

30 “Žmogus su geldomis ir žydelka [A Person with Washtubs and a Jewish Woman],” *Szvieša* 5 (1900).

31 Valančius, *Raštai*, 183. In nineteenth-century Lithuanian texts, *žmogus* (“man,” “person”) could also imply “peasant.”

32 –v–k. [Vincas Kudirka], “Nuo Zapyškio (Suvalkija ed.) [From Zapyškis, Suvalki Province],” *Ūkininkas* 9 (1890), 137–139; V.K. [Vincas Kudirka], “Apie pardavinčius [On Shops],” *Ūkininkas* 2 (1895): 9–11; Eketis [Jonas Jazbutis?], “Mauszos aimana [Moaning of Moyshe]”; Driskius [?], “Vartotojų Draugijų reikalingumas [The Need for Cooperatives],” *Šaltinis* 3 (1908): 37–38.

33 X.X. [?], “Žydai ir mes [Jews and Us],” *Šaltinis* 29 (1914): 433–434.

34 Vareikis, “Antisemitizmas Lietuvoje,” 23.

primarily *Ūkininkas* in the late nineteenth century, and mostly *Šaltinis* after the 1905 Revolution, found many reasons to encourage peasants to open up shops: the aforementioned alleged Jewish penchant for cheating; the alleged easy profits in trade; the opportunity to shop on Saturdays, and so on. Not only were Lithuanians explicitly urged to open shops, but success stories were presented, both from Lithuania and other countries.<sup>35</sup>

The Lithuanian press did not simply argue for the establishment of Lithuanian trade enterprises. As Jews operated with solidarity, according to correspondents from Lithuanian newspapers, especially in the economic sphere, and always tried to compromise competing businesses owned by other national groups, Lithuanians too had to maintain solidarity and support “their own” traders and boycott Jewish stores.<sup>36</sup> This would benefit Lithuanians in another way—emigration would decrease, as many would be able to find work in Lithuania, while Jews would be forced out into other countries.<sup>37</sup> There were many writings on this theme in the late nineteenth century, and a new impulse was the boycott of Jewish traders in the Kingdom of Poland that started in 1912, where Polish national democrats lost the elections in Warsaw to the socialist Eugeniusz Jagiełło, who was supported by the Jewish electors.<sup>38</sup> When writing about the boycott in Poland, the Lithuanian clerical press, either directly or indirectly, urged that similar action be taken in Lithuania.<sup>39</sup> The Polish press in Lithuania (*Kurjer Litewski*, *Gazeta Codzienna*, *Przyjaciół*) also urged all Christians,

35 J. Mažulis, “Lietuvių prekyba [Lithuanians in Trading],” *Šaltinis* 23 (1908): 370–371; Kun. Petras Povilas Bulvičius, “Rupinkimės daugiau prekyba! [We Should Be More Concerned with Trade!],” *Šaltinis* 13 (1911): 146–147; Studs. [?], “Ūkio prekybos klausimas Lietuvoje [The Question of Trade in Lithuania],” *Šaltinis* 6 (1914): 81–82.

36 [Jonas Kriaučiūnas], “Kam maskoliai Žydus guja išz kaimų [Why Russians Are Pushing Jews from Villages],” *Ūkininkas* 6 (1893): 41–42; X.X. [?], “Žydai ir mes [Jews and Us].”

37 Musiszki [?], “Ką sako ukinikas savo broliams [What a Farmer Is Telling His Brothers],” *Ūkininkas* 2 (1890): 17–19.

38 Weeks, *From Assimilation to Antisemitism*, 163–169. For more on Polish Antisemitism, see Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate*. File “S perepiskoi po boikotu poliakami evreev,” *LVIA*, f. 930, ap. 1, b. 522.

39 Antanas Šaltūnas, “Kaip lenkai sumanė nusikrapštyti žydų [How Poles Decided to Dispose of Jews],” *Vienybė* 10 (1913): 148–149; *ibid.*, 12 (1913): 178–180.

above all Poles, to act with solidarity in doing business. Such anti-Jewish sentiments were also noticed by the imperial government.<sup>40</sup>

The strongest expression of economic nationalism was in the clerical press, in the late nineteenth century and after the 1905 Revolution, as well as in the liberal-oriented Lithuanian newspapers of the late nineteenth century.<sup>41</sup> The clerical accusations against Jews were summarized by the priest Antanas Maliauskas (Maliauskis) in his 1914 book, *Žydai. Ekonomijos ir visuomenės žvilgsniu* (Jews: An Economic and Social Glance), which professed to be an academic tract, as the author based his arguments on the works of many Western European authors.<sup>42</sup> In Maliauskas's opinion, Jews were by nature inclined to cheat, and their most important goal was profit. They were a parasitic element of society, he wrote, as they chose only the easiest jobs, exploited others, and morally corrupted the society in which they lived.<sup>43</sup>

Among liberals, certain changes are visible. First of all, antisemitic texts in *Varpas* (Bell) and in *Ūkininkas*, which was directed more towards the masses, were different. *Varpas* usually presented a generalized image of the Jew as an exploiter of peasants, based on antisemitic theories popular in Western Europe. *Ūkininkas* would more often present descriptions of everyday events from actual places in Lithuania that illustrated these accusations against Jews. In other words, *Ūkininkas* oriented itself to its readers and spread antisemitic ideas not so much through theoretical deliberations as through examples. In addition, there were virtually no more antisemitic texts in

40 Report from the director of the Police Department, March 1913 (date not indicated), *GARF*, f. 102, oo, 1914 g., op. 244, d. 334, l. 6–7; report of the chief of the Administration of the Suvalki Province Gendarmerie to the Police Department, October 5, 1913, *GARF*, f. 102, oo, 1913 g., op. 243, d. 149, l. 182.

41 Researchers have noted that in the writings of Samogitian bishop Valančius, critiques of Jews were of a secular, not religious, nature: Vareikis, “Tolerancija ir atskyrimas,” 91–103.

42 Maliauskas, *Žydai*.

43 Incidentally, Maliauskas maintained, in all other spheres (science, art, culture, politics) Jews could not lay claim to any other achievements. Conversely, he alleged, they appeared to spread damaging ideas: “In Jewish literature and science, it is first of all subjectivity and egoism that breaks through” (p. 36); “Thanks go to the Jewish theater managers, who very often transform real art into something that is superficial and shameless... Jews are very likely to mock and defame that which others, especially Christians, hold dear, but they do not allow any mention of their faults in literature, or newspapers, or the theater” (p. 46); in politics, he said, they spread liberalism and socialism.

*Varpas* from the mid-1890s,<sup>44</sup> while such content stopped appearing in *Ūkininkas* at about the turn of the century.<sup>45</sup> This change, primarily in *Varpas*, was most likely related to changes in the publication's management. In the mid-1890s, left-wing activists came into power in this organization's management (Stasys Matulaitis, Juozas Bagdonas, Kazys Grinius) who were in close co-operation with the social democrats.<sup>46</sup> Later, texts that could be described as antisemitic or close to antisemitic would rarely appear in Lithuania's liberal press. Thus in 1912 an article appeared in *Lietuvos žinios* about one Lithuanian who tried to trade in flax but gave it up once he faced competition from Jews.<sup>47</sup> Even if the article was based on a true story, it still gave readers the message about the suffering of Lithuanians and the Jewish traders who profited from their labor. *Lietuvos žinios* also featured articles supporting the Lithuanians' aim to take businesses into their own hands, and trade in general, and to become established in the cities—that is, to become the dominant group.<sup>48</sup> In this effort the Jews were seen as competitors.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, articles in the Lithuanian liberal

Maliauskas also claimed that Jewish assimilation was impossible and undesirable: "The mixing of the 'Aryan' nationalities with Jews would bring them to intellectual, physical, and moral degradation. Jewish integration into Christian public life has already had much to do with people's retraction from Christian moral requirements. And that attack on morality would be even greater if Jews, not so much for their convictions but for their political persuasions, integrated with Christians. Then they would bring even more elements of the Jewish world view into our lives" (p. 58). This was thus a racist or at least proto-racist approach.

44 Römeris drew attention to this change in 1908: Römeris, *Lietuva*, 106 (first published in 1908).

45 Richter also noted that, starting from 1905, there was no Antisemitism in the discussion on the cooperative movement in the liberal press. Liberals started criticizing clericals for their antisemitic attitudes in establishing cooperatives: Richter, *Antisemitism*. See also Richter, "Antisemitismus und die litauische Intelligenzija," 89–114.

46 Miknys, *Lietuvos demokratų partija*, 106.

47 Ad. [?], "Imkime linų pirklybą savo rankosna [We Should Take Flax Trade into Our Hands]," *Lietuvos žinios* 26 (1912).

48 K. Arpietis, "Rupinkimės pirklyba ir pramone [We Should Take Care of Trade and Industry]," *Lietuvos žinios* 111 (1914).

49 K. Gr. [Kazys Grinius], "1913 met. II. Santykiai su kitataučiais [The Year 1913. Relations with Other National Groups]," *Lietuvos žinios* 16 (1914). Similar texts were published in *Lietuvos ūkininkas*: P.R. [?], "Mums reikia praturtėti [We Should Become Richer]," *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 5 (1914).

press that could be unreservedly termed hostile towards Jews were indeed rare after the 1905 Revolution.<sup>50</sup>

Social-democratic publications such as *Naujoji gadyne* (New Era), which followed not so much national as class ideology, if it featured articles on this topic at all, stressed that not all Jews, but only the Jewish bourgeoisie, were exploiters.<sup>51</sup>

In the nationalist stream of ideology, there was no clearly expressed anti-Jewish economic nationalism. From 1907, when *Viltis* started publication, until September 1913, when the editor-in-chief was replaced and Catholic-oriented editors took over, there were almost no anti-semitic texts. Of course, not all content about Jews in this newspaper was positive. The newspaper's ideologue Smetona, for example, urged Lithuanians to co-operate, as only by practicing solidarity could Lithuanians hope to prevail in the face of Jewish competition. According to the future president of Lithuania, it was wrong not merely that Jews as intermediaries profited off Lithuanians and did not add to the country's (read—Lithuanians') welfare ("Meanwhile, no one realizes that it is certain Lithuanians that add to the Jews' wealth, and that in turn those Jews do not return one penny towards Lithuanian affairs"). What was also inherently wrong was their methods, which he called dishonest: "...having such a monopoly on trade, Jewish intermediaries can put any price they like on agricultural products and their wares. When the farmer tries to match them and asks a higher price for his

50 This was acknowledged also in the Jewish press, which, in truth, had reason to criticize *Lietuvos žinios*. The Yiddish newspaper *Di vokh* (The Week), for example, suggested that *Lietuvos žinios* refrain from nationalistic speculation and thinking that other national groups in Lithuania had to adapt to Lithuanian standards, that is, to recognize their culture and learn their language. The recognition process had to be reciprocal. In addition, *Di vokh* suggested avoiding insinuating articles: "Unzer entfēr [Our Answer]," *Di vokh* 17/18 (1915): 16–20. In terms of insinuating articles, the Yiddish newspaper had in mind several minor announcements published in *Lietuvos žinios* that implied Jewish amiability with the Germans: (S. [?], "Pušalotas, Panev. apskr. [Pušalotas, Panevėžys District]," *Lietuvos žinios* 180 (1914); "Šiauliai," *Lietuvos žinios* 182 (1914). At the time, World War I was already underway, and such articles may have been taken as informing on the Jews to the Russian leadership.

51 P. Siūlelis [Pranas Paršaitis?], "Kas tas 'vidurinis priešas'?" [Who is That "Enemy in the Middle"?], *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 3 (1907): 35–36; M. [Petras Avižonis?], "Apie žydus [About Jews]," *Naujoji gadyne* 10 (1906): 148–149.



grains than is offered, then he really regrets it later, as the traders negotiate a price and in the end force the farmer to sell his grains for peanuts.” After clericals took over the newspaper, a new section appeared titled “Jewish Relations,” along with articles about how Jews interfered with Lithuanians engaging in trade, and urging Lithuanians not to buy from Jewish stores, and so on—that is, the complete economic antisemitic repertoire.<sup>52</sup>

The main mouthpiece for nascent Belarusian nationalism, *Nasha Niva* (1906–1915), wrote positively about Jews.<sup>53</sup> It urged its readers more than once not to listen to propaganda about how Jews were parasites of the Belarusian people. A positive image was formed of Jewish craftsmen, workers, and even traders.<sup>54</sup> Belarusian nationalism was the weakest in the region and, as historians assert, the aim of the first Belarusian party, the Belarusian revolutionary party Hromada, was the social emancipation of the Belarusian peasantry. This idea was propagated by Hromada’s newspaper, *Nasha Dolia*. This newspaper and the party’s other activities sought to build national sentiment, not as an end in itself but rather as a means to facilitate the mobilization of Belarusian peasants for the political struggle. Hromada’s Second Congress in 1906 even announced that the party represented “the laboring poor of Belarus, regardless of national differences.”<sup>55</sup> Thus there was no place for Antisemitism in such a political manifesto.

52 Pranas Kuzma, “Mūsų prekybos reikalais [On Our Trade Affairs],” *Viltis* 136 (1913); Ylakietis [?], “Ar gi pigiau parduoda? [Do They Sell Cheaper?],” *Viltis* 62 (1914); J.P. [?], “Merkinė,” *Viltis* 104 (1914).

53 Biadulia, *Zhdiy na Belarusi*, 17. It is somewhat understandable, since the author of this article, as well as of some others in this newspaper, Žmitrok Biadulia (whose pen name was Samuel [Šmuel] Plaūnik), was a writer of Jewish origin who published in Belarusian, Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian.

54 A.Ū. [?], “Wałasnoje ziemstwo i żydy,” *Nasha Niva* 14 (1911): 195–197; “‘Nacionalnaja’ palityka i... handel,” *Nasha Niva* 28/29 (1911): 354–356; Sorkina, “Evrei i evreiskii vopros,” 241–252.

55 On Belarusian nationalism at the beginning of the twentieth century, see Bich, *Belaruskae adrazhenne*; Radzik, “Prychyny slabastsi,” 195–227; Tereshkovich, *Etnicheskaiia istoriia*.

## CULTURAL THREAT

Back in 1908, Römer, in his famous study of the Lithuanian national movement, noted that “Jews themselves did not pose a threat to Lithuanian national culture. In the sphere of national culture, the question of Lithuanian–Russian and Lithuanian–Polish relations was a hundred times livelier and more acute than that between Lithuanians and Jews.”<sup>56</sup> There were similar assessments in the Lithuanian press of the time.<sup>57</sup> In truth, the leaders of Lithuanian nationalism saw a greater cultural threat from Poles, Russians, and Germans. The historically determined cultural domination of Polish-speakers in Lithuania was seen by some leaders of the Lithuanian national movement, primarily from the right wing, as the greatest threat to Lithuanian ethnic culture. The “Russification” policies started in 1863, which sought Lithuanian assimilation in Vil’na and Kovno Provinces in the future, and acculturation in Suvalki Province, were also real threats to the unhindered spread of Lithuanian national culture.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, in the German Empire, in East Prussia where ethnic Lithuanians lived, there was rather rapid Lithuanian acculturation and assimilation into the dominant German culture. In this context, Jewish culture, which neither the imperial leadership nor the country’s social elite deemed worthy of respect, could not pose any threat to Lithuanians. Indeed, sometimes Jews happened to spread a “foreign” culture and language in Lithuania, yet this was not Jewish but Russian, for which they were condemned in the Lithuanian press.<sup>59</sup> Lithuanian nationalist activists, like the political leaders

56 Römeris, *Lietuva*, 28.

57 J. Bur. [Juozas Burba], “Męs ir žydai [We and Jews],” *Vilniaus žinios* 207 (1905).

58 Staliūnas, *Making Russians*.

59 J.B. [Jonas Vileišis], “Iš savo pastogės. IV [From Our Own Shelter. IV],” *Varpas* 3 (1900). In 1917 the Lithuanian public figure Matas Šalčius wrote about the situation before the war: “In the end, Jews, as expected, have turned out to be opponents of the Lithuanian language as well. Lithuanian teachers who had Jewish pupils at their schools were not allowed to teach the Lithuanian language, as Jews asked that their children be taught Russian, and complained to the government about these Lithuanian teachers elsewhere, in Eržvilkas, Seda, and other places. The Kaunas Jews shouted at the Lithuanians who came into town to the markets and shops for speaking ‘litauckai, chamckai’” (Lithuanian, rude): Šalčius, *Dešimt metų*, 44.

of some other “rural” nations, held ethnically conscious Jews in much higher regard than those who acculturated into a dominant culture (be it Polish, Russian, or the like).<sup>60</sup> Similar condemnations of Jews came from Polish-speaking public figures in Lithuania: “The old concept of the ‘Capitalist Jew’ is giving way to that of the ‘Russifying Jew.’”<sup>61</sup>

The “opposite” process, that is, Jews becoming “Lithuanians of the Mosaic faith,” had not actually begun at that time and was rarely discussed. It was sometimes stated that in contrast with France and Germany, where Jews “became” French or German, in Lithuania they did not become Lithuanian.<sup>62</sup> Even though such remarks sounded like the alleged denunciation of Jews, as the Jews were said to always support the stronger side (which the Lithuanians were not), Lithuanian nationalists did not foster many hopes about the integration of Jews into the Lithuanian nation.<sup>63</sup> One publicist who did broach the subject was Vincas Kudirka, who sometimes based his arguments on the ideas of the well-known French antisemite Édouard Adolphe Drumont. Because Kudirka believed that Jews were inherently evil and could not be reformed, he cautioned non-Jews to beware of them and to struggle against them.<sup>64</sup>

60 Precisely such attitudes were typical of the Ukrainian political leaders from Galicia: Shanes and Petrovsky-Shtern, “An Unlikely Alliance,” 483–505.

61 St. Staniszewski, “My i Żydzi,” *Tygodnik Suwalski* 12 (1907): 5.

62 Q.D. and K. [Vincas Kudirka], “Tevyniški Varpai [Bells of the Fatherland],” *Varpas* 10 (1890): 152.

63 A 1892 article in *Varpas* endorsing mixed marriages between Lithuanians and Jews was most likely the only one of its kind: “Iš Lietuvos [From Lithuania],” *Varpas* 2 (1892): 30.

64 There are several memoirs mentioning that in Kudirka’s first essay in Lithuanian, not Polish, he wrote some lines about “Why Jews do not eat pork”: Kazys Grinius, “Prie V. Kudirkos gyvenimo [On the Life of V. Kudirka],” *YIVO*, RG 1400 (Bund Archives) ME 1 Folder 319, pages unnumbered; Father Tomas Žilinskas’s letter (probably addressed to Juozas Gabrys in 1909), Father T. Žilinskas, “Pora brūkšnių prie Dro Vinco Kudirkos biografijos [Some Lines on Vincas’ Kudirka Biography],” *YIVO*, RG 1400 (Bund Archives) ME 21 Folder 2, pages unnumbered. Later this text (though somewhat edited) was published in *Aušra* 6 (1885): 160–161. For more about Kudirka’s Antisemitism, see Vareikis, “Antisemitizmas Lietuvoje,” 160–161; Sirutavičius, “Notes on the Origin,” 66.

## POLITICAL ENEMIES?

Catholic-oriented publications featured another claim typical of the antisemitic discourse then popular in Europe: that Jews aimed to control the world, or nearly did already. Serafinas Kušeliauskas saw the roots of this supposed Jewish aim in the teachings of the Talmud.<sup>65</sup> The clerical periodicals had no doubt that Jews controlled the world via the banks, other financial institutions, trade, and the press.<sup>66</sup> Truth be told, there were not many publications of this kind; more articles appeared that highlighted Jewish solidarity in a specific location or region. Of course, there was only one step between similar discussions and claims of worldwide Jewish control.

Another criticism of Jews was that they did not support the Lithuanian national movement and “showed no concern for national issues” (as Lithuanians understood them).<sup>67</sup> Lithuanian nationalists saw the dominant political aims on the “Jewish street” as being in opposition to the Lithuanian political program, as the majority of Jewish political movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century sought to reform the Russian Empire, transforming it into a democratic state that would grant its ethnic groups national personal autonomy. The Lithuanian aim to gain territorial autonomy within the ethnographically Lithuanian boundaries objectively went against the Jewish political program.<sup>68</sup> Very similar criticisms were made by Polish National Democrats.<sup>69</sup> There were instances where the illegal Lithuanian press blamed Jews for pandering to the government or even seeking to

65 Kušeliauskas, *Žydų talmudas*, 7.

66 K. [?], “Kokie tad svetimi laikraščiai skaitytini? (Dėl kun. J. Tumo straipsnio. II. Laikraštija ir žydija) [What Kind of Foreign Press Should Be Read? (On Priest J. Tumas’s Article II. Press and Jews)],” *Viltis* 161 (1913); *ibid.*, 2 (1914).

67 “Iš Lietuvos [From Lithuania],” *Varpas* 2 (1892): 29–30; Jon. Kas. [Jonas Kriaučiūnas], “Apie žydus sionistus [On Jewish Zionists],” *Vilniaus žinios* 219 (1905); X.X. [?], “Žydai ir mes [Jews and Us].” The aforementioned Šalčius wrote as follows: “Jews, reaping their bounty from Lithuanian land and hoarding its wealth, have never made any contributions or efforts towards that land’s cultural matters, but put a lot of their funds towards those ‘Zionist languages’ and Jewish national and industrial affairs”: Šalčius, *Dešimt metų*, 44.

68 Pilyps [?], “Naujai apsireiškusi žydų tarpe dvasia [New Spirit among the Jews],” *Vilniaus žinios* 94 (1906); Sirutavičius and Staliūnas, eds., *A Pragmatic Alliance*.

69 Dąbrowski, *Narodowa Demokracja*, 313.

harm Lithuanian interests.<sup>70</sup> Some Polish periodicals published similar charges. Thus *Gazeta Codzienna* blamed all France's woes on Jews and Masons supposedly seizing power there.<sup>71</sup>

However, as in many other European countries, the most common "political claim" against Jews came from the right wing of the Lithuanian national movement and concerned the active participation of Jews in leftist parties and movements. This topic became especially heated during the 1912 elections of the Fourth Russian Duma in Suvalki Province, when in one bloc the representatives of the Lithuanian Left under Bulota united with the Jews and faced off against the Lithuanian clericals. The Lithuanian Catholic press, and primarily *Šaltinis*, accused the Jews of seeking to spread "progressive," meaning leftist, ideas, while Bulota's greatest sin was his collaboration with Jews.

\* \* \*

In most cases the charges against Jews presented here were identical to those in texts written in Lithuanian gentry society in the mid-nineteenth century, which were discussed briefly in Chapter One. Pranaitis and the clericalist press continued traditional accusations of blood libel. Even so, in Lithuania (as in many other European countries) at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially in the clericalist press, new criticisms arose. They warned of a universal Jewish takeover that would lead to a universal collapse of Christian society. There was no shortage of antisemitic articles in the Lithuanian press, especially at the end of the nineteenth century; after the 1905 Revolution they appeared only in the clericalist press. Thus at the turn of the century, Lithuanian and Polish discourse displayed a tendency towards fanatical Antisemitism. However, Antisemitism did not develop into an organized political movement in Lithuania. Racist theories also did not put down deep roots there.

In the late nineteenth century, Antisemitism was strong in both the clerical and the liberal press. It later weakened and was apparent only in publications edited and financed by priests. Only these publications of the 1880s and 1890s and clericalist ones after 1905 might be called fanatically antisemitic, according to Marrus's model.

70 "Iš Lietuvos [From Lithuania]," *Varpas* 2 (1892): 29–30; "Bukite atsargūs! [Be Careful]," *Tėvynės sargas* 8 (1900).

71 "Dlaczego na Zachodzie niema żydów," *Gazeta Codzienna* 116 (1913).

It is hard to reconcile this with the fact that it was precisely in the 1880s and 1890s that Antisemitism was strong in the rest of Europe, and that there too it later also abated.<sup>72</sup> Events that took place in Lithuania and the Romanov Empire generally had more impact on Lithuanian nationalism than did the influence of a given ideology beyond the state's borders. A significant but non-determining factor was the death of probably the loudest proponent of Lithuanian Antisemitism, Kudirka, in 1899. The relatively weak expression of Antisemitism in the Lithuanian press in the early twentieth century is linked to a political conjuncture.<sup>73</sup> Lithuanian nationalism had a clear anti-imperial character (stronger in the left-wing factions and weaker in the right-wing factions), and Jews, whose political activists were mostly leftist or liberal, were suitable allies in this struggle. Thus when Lithuanian leftist parties won elections to the State Duma, they would easily form voting blocs with Jews. *Lietuvos ūkininkas* stated, "Though Jews are not Catholics and not Lithuanians, and though they accepted Russian culture and maintain that culture in our cities, there is one good aspect about them—they are progressives, fighters for freedom, and for a better organization of the state."<sup>74</sup>

There were also the Poles, who were important, if not the most important, opponents to both Lithuanian social democrats and nationalists: to the former as class (and partly cultural) enemies and to the latter as cultural and political enemies. As one of the leaders of the liberal wing of Lithuanian nationalism, Grinius, noted in the late nineteenth century, those who threw their weight behind *Varpas* believed that "Lithuanians still had too few resources to stage a war on several fronts, and did not take part in open Antisemitism."<sup>75</sup> Historical sources provide other cases of how mutually competing nationalism reduced antipathy towards Jews. The situation in Novoaleksandrovsk (Zarasai) at the beginning of the twentieth century was described as follows: the town was home to Jews, Lithuanians, Poles, and Russians. For this reason Antisemitism was not strong; the Poles hated the

72 Brustein, *Roots of Hate*.

73 There is no further discussion here on the attitudes of the Lithuanian leftist activists, for some of whom Antisemitism was in principle unacceptable as it went against general democratic, social-justice, and similar principles.

74 Juozas [?], "Ką daryti? [What Has to Be Done?]," *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 2 (1907).

75 Grinius, *Atsiminimai ir mintys*, 176.

Lithuanians, while the Russians hated them both. And so the Jews were left in peace.<sup>76</sup> Thus in Lithuanian nationalism, except perhaps for the clerical variety, Jews were low in the “hierarchy of enemies.” In fact, they were potential allies in the battle with the most important opponents: the Poles and Russians/Russia.

This need for a political alliance with Jews minimized Antisemitism in the Lithuanian press. However, it can be assumed that the genuine or circumstantial benevolence of some Lithuanian nationalist leaders towards Jews was not transmitted to the masses. Thus, during the elections of the First State Duma in Kovno Province, despite the manipulations of Jonas Basanavičius in the formation of a common bloc with the Jews, there were still many antisemitic comments from the peasantry. Meanwhile, Kazimieras Samajauckas, a member of the National Lithuanian Democratic Party, made the following forthright observation: “a bloc made with the Jews will discredit Lithuanian voters in the ‘eyes of the people.’”<sup>77</sup> During the elections of the Second State Duma, Lithuanian voters were at first afraid of negotiating with Jews, as “on returning [home] they would be skinned for selling out to the Jews.”<sup>78</sup> Similar trends can be seen in the elections of the Fourth Duma as well. According to the priest Juozas Šnapšis (Šnapšys-Margalis), the activism of Lithuanian public figures in Tel’shi was greatly complicated by agitators from Kovno, who disclosed that an agreement was reached with the Jews concerning their collaboration in an election meeting in Kovno. This information was said to have encouraged some of the “sold-out” Lithuanian voters to exclaim: “Hey, listen, they’re selling out to the Jews and Calvinists.”<sup>79</sup> Equally telling was another episode related to the aforementioned Beilis case. The critical articles by Petras Leonas in *Lietuvos ūkininkas* about the supposed Jewish use of Christian blood for religious rituals and Father Pranaitis’s critique provoked considerable criticism from some readers. The editorial board

76 Dumas, “Fun mayn heimshtot,” 318.

77 Iks. [Jonas Basanavičius], “Kauno gubernijos atstovų rinkimas 1906 m. ir jo istorija [Elections of Deputies in Kovno Province in 1906 and Its History],” *Vilniaus žinios* 196 (1906).

78 J. [?], “Rinkimai atstovų Dūmon Kaune [Elections of Representatives to Duma in Kovno],” *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 6 (1907).

79 Father J. Šnapšis’s October 4, 1912, letter to A. Dambrauskas, *VUB RS*, F1 E94, l. 8. One of the most active agitators, Martynas Yčas, was an Evangelical reformist, not a Catholic, as were most other Lithuanians.

rushed to convince its readers that the superstition itself deserved criticism, but that the newspaper by no means defended those Jews who “harmd and exploited” Lithuanians.<sup>80</sup> However, this defense was probably ineffective: according to one of the paper’s publishers, Felicija Bortkevičienė, subscriptions to *Lietuvos ūkininkas* declined the following year because of Leonas’s texts.<sup>81</sup> These examples show that latent forms of Antisemitism remained even among peasants who sympathized with Lithuanian leftist and liberal political streams, that is, those who were not typically antisemitic. Lithuanian liberals understood this quite well, as the above example and other cases show. When Jews asked why the Lithuanian liberal press did not combat Antisemitism openly, one representative of the movement allegedly replied: “This is not convenient, it may discredit us; they will say that we have sold out—after all, they [Jews] have power.”<sup>82</sup> This collusion with popular Judeophobia did not allow Lithuanian liberals to combat Antisemitism openly.

80 “Nuo Redakcijos [From Editors],” *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 46 (1912): 475–476.

81 Petras Leonas, “Mano pergyvenimai ir prisiminimai. V-ji dalis. (1906–1914 m. m.) [My Experiences and Memoirs. Part 5: 1906–1915],” *LMAVB RS*, F. 117–1078, l. 125.

82 L. Borisov, “Pis’ma iz Litvy,” *Rassvet* 2 (1915): 18.





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## Lithuania during the “Storms in the South” (Early 1880s)

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In the early 1880s the first, and far from the last, wave of pogroms in the Romanov Empire swept through southern Russia. This is known in Jewish sources as the “Storms in the South.”<sup>1</sup> Three waves of pogroms struck the southern provinces in 1881: on April 15–21, April 26–May 10, and June 30–August 16, respectively. As a rule, anti-Jewish violence would start in a larger town and spread in waves to surrounding areas. Such waves did not recur in later months or years, but at this time larger pogroms did take place in Warsaw (December 1881),<sup>2</sup> Balta (March 1882), Ekaterinoslav (July 1883), and Nizhnii Novgorod (June 1884). Current scholarship rejects Dubnow’s accusations that imperial authorities, primarily Interior Minister Nikolai Ignat’ev, inspired the violence, and it no longer presents a monocausal explanation of how the pogroms arose.<sup>3</sup> Until quite recently, scholars focused on finding socioeconomic reasons for the violence, such as poor harvests and industrial decline in the early 1880s, increased competition for work between Jews and Gentiles as a result of modernization, the partial improvements in Jews’ legal status during the reign of Alexander II, and the influx of masses from the central provinces seeking employment in towns within the Pale of Settlement. It has been thought that socioeconomic modernization and a certain liberalism within the Great

1 Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe*, 144.

2 On the Warsaw pogrom, see Golczewski, *Polnisch-jüdische Beziehungen*, 41–51.

3 Klier has shown that Dubnow accepted the accounts given by Jews who lived through the pogroms and who blamed the imperial authorities for giving rise to the violence. This explanation long dominated history books: Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 384–414. On historiography devoted to this topic, see Boysen, “Die revisionistische Historiographie,” 13–42; Staliūnas, “Rusijos politika žydų atžvilgiu,” 135–150. Another version given by historians says that the pogroms were organized not by the central authorities but by an organization founded at the beginning of 1881 by high-ranking officials, known as the Secret Alliance: Cherkover, “Nae materialn,” 445–465. However, historians today can find no evidence to support this theory.

Reforms not only made Jews more visible (some did amass considerable fortunes) but also led to direct competition between Jews and Gentiles, primarily in the labor market, and that this increased anti-semitic sentiment.<sup>4</sup> Recent work by Klier, while not denying the importance of these socioeconomic factors, claims that these circumstances alone are insufficient to explain mass anti-Jewish violence. On the other hand, the empirical evidence presented by Klier, showing that violence in 1881–1882 was directed mostly against property rather than persons, would seem to argue that socioeconomic factors are the root of the problem. This was the interpretation presented in a collection of essays published in 2010, *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History*, which states: “These riots caused greater loss of property (shops, warehouses, and homes) than deaths. The motivating factors here were socioeconomic, in particular the disruption caused by industrialization. Thus these pogroms were not ‘interpersonal’ but rather targeted wealth and property as symbols of economic injustice.”<sup>5</sup> Usually scholars do not ascribe these outbreaks of violence exclusively to religious motives, even in cases where the pogroms began during religious feasts, although anti-Judaism played a certain role, as can be seen in cases where Jewish religious symbols were desecrated during pogroms. Historians stress the influence of the political crisis that arose after the assassination of Alexander II. According to Klier, within the empire Christian society regarded Jews not only as “aliens” but also as members of an inferior ethno-confessional group, against whom discrimination was justified. The association

4 Berk, *Year of Crisis*, 50–53, 55, 179; Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 108–124, 218, 220–223, 231–232; Rogger, “Conclusion and overview,” 333–337; Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, 57–58; Löwe, “Pogroms in Russia,” 20–22; Löwe, “Anti-semitism in Russia,” 178. Historians seek the causes of the 1871 Odessa pogrom in exacerbated competition between Greek and Jewish merchants: Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland*, vol. 1, 428. Authors discussing specific 1881–1882 pogroms also attach great significance to socioeconomic factors, although they also stress religious opposition, along with social changes caused by modernization and migration. In the case of the 1881 Kiev pogrom, Natan Meir sums up these reasons: “The reality was probably some combination of the two: a heady mixture of local and imported animosity that combusted spontaneously in the context of rapid modernization and change, economic competition, social instability, religious antagonism, and the uneasy proximity of religious and ethnic groups as a result of migration”: Meir, *Kiev*, 52.

5 Dekel-Chen et al., “Introduction,” 4.

of Jewry with the assassination of the tsar was regarded by some Christians as a grave insult.<sup>6</sup> The problem of Jewish status has been stressed by Antony Polonsky: as an ethno-confessional group, Jews faced discrimination, yet individually, some of them succeeded in becoming wealthy. Ordinary people, who had not been able to improve their situation following the emancipation of the serfs (1861), saw this as a blatant injustice.<sup>7</sup>

The pogroms of the early 1880s are especially important and in some sense even mark a watershed in anti-Jewish violence, and more broadly speaking, in the history of Antisemitism in the Russian Empire. Although they are markedly different from later periods of anti-Jewish violence (1903–1906, and World War I and its aftermath) because they were strikingly spontaneous and less directed against people,<sup>8</sup> they were a completely new phenomenon in anti-Jewish violence. As stated earlier, the pogroms would begin in the larger towns (this was not a completely new phenomenon in the Romanov Empire, as can be seen from the 1871 pogrom in Odessa) and then spread across a wider area. The scale of the violence also changed markedly. No less important is the fact that pogroms became rooted in mass consciousness as a phenomenon, and the view formed that the people themselves could “punish” Jews.<sup>9</sup>

The years 1881–1882 are also important in the political reorientation of Jews within the Russian Empire. Although some historians stress that the political processes that emerged after this wave of pogroms were not completely new,<sup>10</sup> most agree that the years 1881–1882 were indeed a turning point. For these years saw the decline of hopes for integration within Russian society and the inception of new forms of political activity, known as the New Jewish Politics, whereby there was a move away from elitist methods of action typical of *shtadlanim* and towards the spread of mass politics and new ideologies, primarily Zionism and socialism.<sup>11</sup> Of course these political processes

6 Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 62–88.

7 Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland*, vol. 2, 5.

8 Dekel-Chen et al., “Introduction,” 2.

9 Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 58–59.

10 Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, 7–9.

11 Berk, *Year of Crisis*; Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe*, 148–153; Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 255–383. A *shtadlan* was an intercessor who represented the Jewish community to the government and acted as a kind of lobbyist.

affected Lithuania too because, in terms of political identity, the Jewish community within the Russian Empire was united; that is, it was not divided geographically or territorially, and Lithuania in many ways became the center where modern Russian Jewish politics crystallized.<sup>12</sup>

Some contemporary Jews and later scholars such as Dubnow and his followers explained the situation in Lithuania and Belarus consistently: while the authorities organized pogroms in southern Russia, the authorities in the Northwestern Region prevented them.<sup>13</sup> Such an explanation might have been consistent, but it was not very logical. No one attempted to explain why the authorities in one part of the empire would wish to provoke pogroms, while officials in another part took the opposite view. Indeed, there were some more sophisticated explanations of the situation in Lithuania and Belarus in Jewish discourse of the time: “as a consequence of the lack of factories, the province lacks large concentrations of workers, who are the main disrupting force everywhere. Outbreaks of disorder are hindered also by economic and administrative conditions facing peasants in our provinces; our peasants are worried about their livelihoods and fear the authorities. Indeed, in the end, the very relations between Jews and our indigenous population are not so harsh or inimical.”<sup>14</sup> Another source stated that the difference between Lithuania and southern Russia was determined by ethnic differences, namely that very few Russians were in Lithuania and that most of them were newcomers, while the local population had not been thoroughly Russified.<sup>15</sup>

The imperial authorities also presented an explanation of why “the anti-Jewish movement appeared in southern and southwestern parts of Russia but had no effect at all on the Northwestern Region.” It seemed to the central authorities that anti-Jewish violence in the Northwestern Region was even more likely because Jews “exploited” people even more there than in the south. At the time, Jewish community leaders and imperial officials alike extolled the “energetic” measures taken by the governor general of Vil’na, Eduard Tottleben, but they also mentioned other regional differences:

12 Fishman, “Nuo šadlanų iki masinių partijų,” 251–269.

13 Dubnov, *Noveishaia istoriia*, 97–147; Rülff, *Drei Tage*, 58.

14 Emka [?], “Trevozhnye ozhidaniia. (Korrespondentsiia “Rassveta”),” *Rassvet* 18 (1881): 755–756.

15 M. L-i [?], “Korrespondentsiia,” *Nedel’naia khronika Voskhoda* 23 (1882): 624.

... on the one hand, in the south populated by the Little Russian<sup>16</sup> people, it was much easier to find grounds for prompting the common people to act. Stories of Cossack liberty and other popular movements are very much alive in the memory of peasants raised in a favorable climate on rich soil. The southern population, as we know, is much livelier, more independent, gifted, and freedom-loving than the underdeveloped populace of Lithuania and Belarus. In addition historical memory in the Southwestern Region has preserved stories of the Jewish pogroms that took place sometime in the past in Little Russia, and of the *Koliivshchina*<sup>17</sup> of little more than a century ago, during which Jews perished alongside the [Polish] gentry.<sup>18</sup>

Similar explanations circulated in the correspondence of officials in the Northwestern Region. Thus the police superintendent (*ispravnik*) of Rossieny District stated that "in this province the peasants do not have the same burning historical hatred of Jews as those in the Southwest do."<sup>19</sup> The official version proclaimed that the Northwestern Region was spared from the pogroms by the governor general of Vil'na, the apathy of the local populace, and the lack of anti-Jewish traditions.

Now we will examine Christian-Jewish relations in Lithuania at the time when pogroms took place in the south of the Russian Empire to see whether, as historians have claimed, there were no pogroms in Lithuania in the early 1880s.<sup>20</sup>

#### ANTI-JEWISH SENTIMENT GAINS STRENGTH

This search for the roots of ethnic tension should begin with the economic situation, which, some scholars claim, is very important in trying

16 The Russian name for Ukraine in the nineteenth century, implying that Little Russians (Ukrainians) were part of the so-called triune Russian nation.

17 An uprising of peasants and Cossacks in 1768 in Right-bank Ukraine.

18 Report of the Commission Considering Jewish Legislation, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 delo-proizvodstvo, op. 39, 1882, d. 512, l. 119. Certain historians make similar arguments: Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 217–218; Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, 60.

19 Official letter from the police superintendent of Rossieny District to all policemen of that district, May 9, 1881, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap, 1, b. 21624, l. 20.

20 The first version of this research on the situation in the early 1880s was published a decade ago: Staliūnas, "Anti-Jewish Disturbances," 119–138.

to explain the wave of pogroms that swept southern Russia. The 1880 harvest was not a poor one, but food prices did rise sharply in certain towns in the Northwestern Region at the beginning of 1881.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, disturbances in 1880 might have had the same cause: at Ponevezh (Kovno Province) in August, more than 1,000 Jews and Christians dismantled part of the bridge leading to the railway station, despite police intervention, and set up barricades to stop a merchant named Berlin from sending grain abroad for fear that prices would rise.<sup>22</sup> According to the official explanation (in *Vilenskii Vestnik*), the price rise was abetted by Jews who were buying up food brought to market and selling it in other places where prices were higher.<sup>23</sup> According to the governor general of Vil'na, the economic crisis was made worse by the pogroms in the southern borderlands of the empire, as Jews stopped providing credit and engaging in other economic activities out of fear for their future.<sup>24</sup>

It can be assumed that the assassination of Alexander II on March 1, 1881, was regarded in all social strata as a "political crisis." As Irwin Michael Aronson stated, "If the tsar could be assassinated, then anything was possible."<sup>25</sup> The violent death of the tsar had an impact even on peasant mentalities. Violence on such a level could undermine established concepts of order, as the imperial authorities well understood. The Russian censors struck out all references in foreign publications to the murder of tsars such as Peter III and Paul I.<sup>26</sup> Certain incidents in Lithuania support this thesis. Thus one peasant from the Linkuva area (Kovno Province) who suspected two Jews of stealing horses took matters into his own hands. When others tried to stop him, he replied: "We will slit the gullets of all you Jews here, and we will not

21 "Vil'na, 2-go ianvaria," *Vilenskii vestnik* 1 (1881).

22 Report from Kovno governor to governor general of Vil'na, August 18, 1880, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1880 m., b. 242, l. 1–2.

23 "Iz m-ka Ol'kenik, Trokskago uezda (Kor. 'Vil. vestn.),' " *Vilenskii vestnik* 34 (1881).

24 Copy of the annual report from governor of Vil'na, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1882 m., b. 100, l. 51–52. The contemporary Jewish press also reported on the economic crisis in Lithuania: R. [?], "Suvalki, 29 ianvaria," *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 6 (1882): 132; Nabliudatel' [?], "Kovno, 25 apreliia," *ibid.*, 19 (1882): 507–508.

25 Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 88.

26 Report of the acting head of the Supreme Press Authority to the Vil'na separate foreign literature censor, December 27, 1872, *LVIA*, f. 1241, ap. 1, b. 18, l. 86.

have to answer for it; the Lord Tsar is not here nor any other authority."<sup>27</sup> The authorities received news from Suvalki Province that a peasant felt secure causing anti-Jewish agitation because no one intended to obey the new tsar.<sup>28</sup> However, in discussions of anti-Jewish sentiment and violence in Lithuania, the wave of pogroms in southern Russia was more important than the killing of the tsar.

At the beginning of the 1880s, local officials as well as the central authorities and the press, especially Jewish publications, received information that Christians in many Lithuanian towns and cities intended to attack or even kill some or all of the Jews. Often such rumors or even direct threats against Jews were associated with the southern pogroms; often it was said that Jews would be treated "as they were in Kiev."<sup>29</sup> In the southern provinces and Lithuania alike, sometimes threats of a future settling of accounts with Jews were accompanied by assertions that the authorities had given permission to beat up Jews.<sup>30</sup> News of the pogroms in the south reinforced the belief in Lithuania that beating and robbing Jews was allowed: "our masses have somehow formed the opinion that now the Jewish population of Russia has been deprived of its right to exist and that from now on the Jews have been left to the mercy of fate."<sup>31</sup> Or take this similar evidence:

... the southern Russian pogroms have had an effect on the sentiments of the Christian population of our region too. Before the pogroms our Christians were friendly towards the Jews and did

27 Report from the police superintendent of the Ponevezh District to Kovno governor, June 20, 1881, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 21624, l. 136.

28 File "Po obvineniiu krest'ianina posady i gminy Przerosl' Leontii Marusevicha v prestuplenii, predusmotrennom 252 st. ul. o nak.," *AGAD*, Prokurator Warszawskiej izby sądowej, 734. Granted, some witnesses denied claims that the peasant Leontii Marusevich had whipped up anti-government sentiment.

29 "Vnutrennee obozrenie," *Rassvet* 16 (1881): 618; Ebe [?], "Iz Svetsianskogo uezda, Vilenskoj gubernii," *Russkii evrei* 41 (1881): 1615–1616; report of the chief of the Mariampol' (Marijampolė) and Vladislavovo District gendarmerie to the chief of the Warsaw District Gendarmes, May 15, 1883 (N.S.), *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1247, l. 319 (here anti-Jewish feeling was being whipped up by a workman from Kiev Province).

30 Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 82–88; Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 31.

31 Emka [?], "Trevozhnyia ozhidaniia. (Korrespondentsiia "Rassveta")," *Rassvet* 18 (1881): 756.



not complain of Jewish exploitation or any kind of “oppression” at their hands. But now echoes have begun to reach them of the savage violence in southern Russia, with various comments, such as that there is no punishment for stealing Jewish property, that the highest authorities condone beating up “Yids” and that soon all Jews will be driven out of Russia—and from this time, the previous good relations with Jews have turned into exceptional enmity. Nowadays we hear threats against Jews very often; at the slightest occasion they raise their fists at Jews and flagrantly suggest they clear off to America.<sup>32</sup>

Lithuanian Jewish communities felt particular concern not only following the first wave of pogroms in the south in spring 1881 but also at the turn of 1881–1882.<sup>33</sup>

News of the southern pogroms was received from newspapers, letters,<sup>34</sup> and rumors.<sup>35</sup> Undoubtedly Jewish refugees from the pogroms in the southern provinces increased the panic among local Jews.<sup>36</sup> The

32 M. Zeifert, “Stolbtsy (Vilenskoi gub.) 21 ianvaria 1882 g.,” *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 5 (1882): 104. This publication also reported that the peasants had even agreed how to divide up Jewish property after the Jews had been expelled. The more conscientious among them apparently even offered Jews a symbolic payment.

33 There were many publications on this topic in the Jewish press, such as *Russkii evrei* and *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda*. See also the report of the chief of the Administration of the Suvalki Province Gendarmerie to the chief of the Warsaw District of Gendarmes, February 5, 1882 (NS), *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1236, l. 1.

34 Jewish memoirs note that most information was received from letters: Wengeroff, *Memoiren*, 189–190; Klińska, *Aus dem Shtetl*, 216–217.

35 See files: “Po telegramme Ministra Vnutrennikh Del o nabliudenii za Khristianskim i Evreiskim naseleniem s tsel'iu predupredit' bezporiadki,” *LVIA*, f. 378, ps. 1881 m., d. 52; “O stolknoveniakh mezhdru evreiami i khristianami i o rasprostranennykh raznykh slukhakh, podlozhnykh pis'makh, i proklamatsiakh, podstrekaiushchikh k izbieniiu evreev,” *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1310; “Prikaz po voiskam okruga za no 93 v sluchae stolknoveniia mezhdru evreiskim i khristianskim naseleniem,” *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 21624; “O merakh presecheniia evreiskikh pogromov,” *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 101, b. 4922. The majority of information in the rest of this chapter is based on material from these cases, and when certain information (about fires, clerical accusations, and so on) is repeated often, further references are not given.

36 *Vilenskii vestnik* 110 (1881).

impression that Jews were under attack everywhere was confirmed by rumors that pogroms had taken place in Lithuania, too. In Tel'shi, Viktoras Daugirdas told townsfolk that apparently in Kovno, "disorder had broken out between Jews and Christians, where Jews were being throttled, cut, and set on fire."<sup>37</sup> Rumors of arson are worth separate attention.

According to Dubnow, in the Northwestern Region arson was one method favored by rioters because the authorities would not permit pogroms.<sup>38</sup> In the spring and summer of 1881, there was a drought in some parts of the Northwestern Region, which led to many fires. Indeed, official statistics recorded more incidents of arson in Kovno Province during the 1880s than during previous or subsequent decades.<sup>39</sup> In Suvalki Province there were thirty-six more fires in 1881 than in 1880, while in 1882 there were seventy-five less than in 1881. Meanwhile, the number of fires in the province classified as arson in 1882 increased (from fifty-eight in 1881 to seventy in 1882).<sup>40</sup> This probably added extra fuel to talk of arson, and it is not surprising that Jewish communities in various Lithuanian towns and cities reacted very sensitively to rumors of plans to burn down their houses. Official investigations following fires usually found no evidence of arson, and rumors of future cases of arson were not confirmed. However, this does not mean that there were no cases of arson at all. On October 3, 1881 (NS), one Jewish house in the village of Givaltavas (Mariampol' [Marijampolė] District, Suvalki Province) burned down. All circumstances pointed to its being arson: the house began to burn simultaneously in two places and the doors were closed off on the outside with a rope, so the family had to jump through a window to flee. Suspicion fell on a peasant from the village who, a few days earlier, had threatened the

37 Secret report from the Tel'shi policeman to the governor of Kovno, May 29, 1881, KAA, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 21624, l. 116.

38 Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 54. Modern historians sometimes give the impression that arson really was the violence of choice against Jews in the Northwestern Region: Berk, *Year of Crisis*, 35; Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 218; Greenbaum, *The Jews of Lithuania*, 187.

39 Frierson, *All Russia is Burning!* 112–114. There were more cases of arson in Vil'na Province in the early 1880s than in previous decades, but the amount is the same as in later decades.

40 Annual reports from the governor of Suvalki for 1881 and 1882, RGIA, f. 1284, op. 70, d. 267, l. 49–50, f. 1284, op. 223, d. 43, l. 34.

householder with arson.<sup>41</sup> However, a settling of domestic accounts, even between people of different religions, should not be categorized as collective action against Jews. Clearly, there may have been many such cases, but it is hard to find evidence of any organized, widespread campaign to burn down Jewish property. Undoubtedly, in nineteenth-century Lithuania, as in other parts of the Russian Empire, arson was a typical means of settling scores and expressing social protest.<sup>42</sup> However, in the early 1880s the southern pogroms and the rise in anti-Jewish sentiment in Lithuania increased Jewish sensitivity to any situation in which Gentile malice could be suspected, and thus they often looked for arsonists with anti-Jewish aims. Indeed, the Jewish press of the time often featured reports of local fires that destroyed both Jewish and Gentile buildings or stories about attempts by both groups to prevent fires.<sup>43</sup> We will return to this topic in Chapter Five in our discussion of accusations against alleged Jewish arsonists.

Alongside news passed on orally (rumors, threats, warnings), a great deal of written information was available in the early 1880s.<sup>44</sup> There is some evidence of the spread of variously printed literature dealing with Jews. In one case there was talk of a book dealing with Jewish ritual killings written by a defrocked Catholic priest, Ipolit Liutostanskii.<sup>45</sup> A report in the Jewish press stated that a Lithuanian book printed in

41 Report of the chief of the Marijampol' and Vladislavovo District Gendarmerie to the chief of the Warsaw District Gendarmes, October 5, 1881 (NS), *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, b. 1310, l. 286.

42 Frierson, *All Russia is Burning!* 116–117; Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 54–56.

43 For example, in the periodicals *Rassvet* or *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda*.

44 In studies of pogroms in the Russian Empire in 1881–1882, this topic has received little attention from scholars. Only Aronson has written in detail about it, but he relied on published sources and so was unable to offer deeper analysis: Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 96–100. His theory that such materials were not widespread should be corrected, as the material cited in this chapter shows.

45 –‘, –‘ [?], “Verzhbolovo (Suvalk. Gub.),” *Russkii evrei* 9 (1883). It was in 1880 that one of Liutostanskii's works that mentions the blood-libel superstition appeared in Lithuania: Liutostanskii, *Ob upotreblenii evreiamii*. On Liutostanskii, see Klier, *Imperial Russia's Jewish Question*, 423–426; Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, 59; Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland*, vol. 1, 435. While still a Catholic priest, Liutostanskii was notorious for his improper behavior and various criminal activities: file “Po prosheniiu ksendza Liutostanskago zhaliushchegosia na medlennost' proizvodstva dela po podozreniiu ego v namerenii ubit' doch' kakogo-to evreia,” *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1867 m., b. 1250.

Latin characters, *The Jews' Lament*, was being distributed in Miela-gėnai and Tverečius Rural Districts (Sventsiany District, Vil'na Province), which spoke of combating such evils as middlemen and local officials and encouraged readers to beat and rob Jews as in the southern parts of the empire. Apparently the peasants believed each printed word as if it were law and bought up these booklets for fifteen kopecks each. Peasants so liked this verse that they would sing it even in Jewish-owned taverns. Among these songs is one called *Peikt zhidov*, which, according to the Jewish press, was the Lithuanian for "beat up Jews."<sup>46</sup> Peasants in these districts passed a resolution to expel Jews from the area.<sup>47</sup> There is almost no doubt that a collection of songs and articles, *Lietuvos bičiulis* (Lithuania's Friend), by the Lithuanian national movement activist Father Silvestras Gimžauskas (probably published in Ragnit in 1881) was being distributed around Mielagėnai and Tverečius; this included a song called "The Jews' Lament."<sup>48</sup> This work makes fun of Jews who were running taverns and could no longer make a living because priests were encouraging peasants to join the temperance movement. If local Jews had read the booklets themselves, they might not have been so afraid, because the song mocked one Jewish professional group but made no reference to violent action against all Jews.<sup>49</sup> However, Jews who understood at least some colloquial Lithuanian may have heard peasants singing just one part of this song, and most likely their ears would have picked up the refrain "Aj, waj chower bim bam bam!/Bus gal Zidam pawisam" ("Woe's me, matey, bim bam boo! It's all up for the Jew").<sup>50</sup> The author of the song, penning the phrase "It's all up for the Jew," meant perhaps that if Lithuanian peasants stopped drinking vodka, Jewish tavern tenants would no longer have a source of income. However, both those singing

46 It actually meant "blame" and not "beat up."

47 Ebe [?], "Iz Svetsianskago uezda Vilenskoi gubernii."

48 Gimžauskas, *Lietuvos bičiulis*, 23–26. It later appeared in other publications: *Tėvynės kalendorius 1911 metų*, 47–48. The titles of the songs changed slightly.

49 Jewish innkeepers are mocked in Gimžauskas's sermons, too: Gimžauskas, *Pamokslai*, 260–261. For more on Gimžauskas, see Subačius, "Tautinio išsivadavimo kultūros žmogus," 11–46.

50 *Chower* (Yiddish and Hebrew for "friend" – khaver) is one Yiddish word that was likely familiar to many Lithuanian peasants. A later publisher who appreciated the ambiguous meaning of the refrain replaced it with one from a later Gimžauskas ditty – *bus girtybei po visam*: Strazdas, *Daina*, 3–7.

the song and those listening to it might understand the text as a reference to a settling of scores with Jews. The meaningless words of the first line (bim, bam, bam) could be taken as merely line-fillers to sustain the beat or the sound of quite a different kind of beating. The words have this meaning when repeated in a later Gimžauskas oeuvre.<sup>51</sup> Jews were afraid of the possible effect of this verse, as shown not only by the report in the Jewish press but also by a later Gimžauskas ditty that echoes Jewish reaction to *Lietuvos bičiulis*. His later verse speaks of Jewish complaints that the book encouraged the killing of Jews, then asserts in reply that temperance was the best guarantee for preventing violence against Jews: “Tegul žino tą skundikai,/Jogei blaivus katalikai/Žydų mušti neketina:/Nes savžinė jiems to gina,” “Vo kas mėgsta girtuokliaut–/Tik toks gali Žydus pjaut!” (“Let complainers know/that sober Catholics/do not intend to beat up Jews:/Because their conscience forbids it” whereas “Only those who loves the booze/ Can go out an’ kill the Jews!”)<sup>52</sup>

Most handwritten texts found by the police in May 1881 show that Judeophobic agitation was very intense at that time, although similar flyers were distributed in later years as well.<sup>53</sup> This written matter can be placed in several categories in terms of its function: flyers or letters mobilizing potential rioters; threats addressed to Jews; warnings and interpretations of anti-Jewish violence. Clearly this categorization is relative, because some of these written texts, like the alleged orders of the tsar or other high ranking officials permitting the beating of Jews, may have fulfilled several functions, such as mobilizing thugs or frightening Jews.

The *alleged official commands* permitting the beating of Jews or the destruction of their property may seem to be an entirely logical response from the imperial authorities to the assassination of the tsar, for which Jews were blamed (because one of the conspirators, Gesia Gelfman, was Jewish). Some of these documents distributed in Lithuania were very crude and could only be believed by utterly backward

51 Gimžauskas, *Juokaunos dainos*, 5.

52 Ibid., 3–6.

53 *Rassvet* 16 (1882): 594. According to newspaper information (*Rassvet* claims it lifted the story from *Odesskii vestnik*), letters were distributed in Vil’na announcing that during Easter there would be a mass beating of Jews and a ransacking of their homes, and all Christian believers were invited to take part.

people. One of them proclaimed: "The Sovereign wishes Jews beat up. Minister Ignat'ev. Petersburg."<sup>54</sup> Other documents were more carefully composed. One such decree attempted to imitate real documents in detail. It had a title—"Supreme Manifesto"—and listed the imperial titles: "We, Alexander III, emperor and autocrat of all the Russians, king of Poland, grand duke of Finland, etc., etc." It proclaimed: "From today's date to July 1, 1881, we command the annihilation of Jewish homes and the plundering of all Jewish property in all Russian provinces without exception, sparing neither poor nor rich."<sup>55</sup> As noted earlier, such alleged imperial decrees may have functioned both to mobilize thugs and frighten Jews.

At first sight the point of *mobilizing* texts seems clear: they were intended to call rioters to attention and report important information (such as where and when attacks would take place). Some may even have created the illusion that an organization of rioters already existed that had broad connections and even ammunition.<sup>56</sup> In May 1881 a flyer was found stating: "General Declaration. We have changed our minds! We will act differently; we will beat up the Jews today because of the large influx of people, and invite all those who have come to market to take part."<sup>57</sup> A similar announcement was posted in Salantai (Kovno Province) stating that workmen who arrived from Kiev were getting ready to beat up Jews.<sup>58</sup> However, the question arises as to whether it was wise to announce future attacks publicly so

54 Secret report from the Vil'na governor to the governor general of Vil'na, May 8, 1882, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps. 1881, b. 52, l. 149, 152; secret report from the policeman of Disna to the governor of Vil'na, May 3, 1882, *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 101, b. 4922, l. 171; secret report from the vice-governor of Vil'na to the Police Department, May 8, 1882, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, 1882, d. 280, ch. 18, l. 1v-2v.

55 An alleged imperial decree, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps. 1881 m., b. 52, l. 78.

56 "We have already prepared twenty-two people and are waiting for you to begin thrashing the blasted Yids; as soon as your business starts, let us know and we will come with weapons; I shall go to Grodno to talk with our men about this business; so that you can sort this out in one night, I am sending you five pounds of gunpowder": Report from the police superintendent of Vil'na to the governor of Vil'na, June 3, 1882, *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 39, b. 66, l. 1.

57 Report from the police superintendent of Rossieny District to the governor of Kovno, May 21, 1881, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 21624, l. 67.

58 Secret report from the police superintendent of Tel'shi District to the governor of Kovno, May 14, 1882, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 21747, l. 26.

that Jews and policemen could be prepared. There was no point in informing the local police of such matters, while making such an announcement to Jews may have been an attempt to frighten them, especially since the Rossieny flyer, as official correspondence on the matter indicates, was written in Russian. If its authors had only wished to mobilize like-minded people, they would most likely have written in Polish or Lithuanian. Obviously another explanation is credible, which local officials promoted in the Salantai case<sup>59</sup> and many other cases: that the texts were written by Jews themselves in order to elicit protection from the authorities.<sup>60</sup> That would explain why the text was in Russian: it was easy to find a Russophone Jew, and, no less importantly, officials would understand such a “document” immediately.

Among the many *mobilizing* texts, one stands out from the linguistic point of view, but this case is not clear-cut.<sup>61</sup> Two texts in “Gothic script” were found at Novoaleksandrovsk (Zarasai) calling on people to destroy local Jews.<sup>62</sup> Gothic script was used by Protestants, but there were few of them in this corner of Lithuania, so perhaps the local police confused Gothic and Latin scripts.

Thus sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between *mobilizing* and *threatening* texts. At the same time, texts were circulated that can be defined unambiguously as threatening.

Threats in some of these texts sounded truly cruel. A proclamation found in Shavli threatened, “we will cut off the heads of baby Yids and hang you.”<sup>63</sup> In Vil’na in May 1881 certain townsfolk received flyers

59 Secret reports from the police superintendent of Tel’shi District to the governor of Kovno, May 14 and 22, 1882, *Ibid.*, l. 26, 27. The superintendent reported that Jews were always in conflict with the Ogiński.

60 We will return to this topic later.

61 It seems logical to assume that in cases where policemen only cite such documents, they were written in Russian. In other cases it is likely that the language of composition would be specified. From the cases known to us, officials acted according to this logic.

62 Report from the police superintendent of the Novoaleksandrovsk (Zarasai) District to the governor of Kovno, August 14, 1881, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 21624, l. 167.

63 Secret report from the police superintendent of Shavli District to the chancellery of the Kovno governor, May 16, 1881, *ibid.*, l. 38. In this case, too, the policeman suspected that Jews had written the text themselves, and his suspicions fell on a particular Jew, who had similar handwriting.

and letters in Russian that used the word *Zhid* (Russian for Yid, as opposed to *evrei*, Jew<sup>64</sup>) and were intended not only to warn Jews of future violence but also threaten them.<sup>65</sup> In these messages there are elements of both religious Judeophobia (*izvergi khristian*: scourge of Christians) and socioeconomic grievance ("because you [Jews] never fail to rob us"). One text revives the medieval topos comparing Jews with devils and hell ("hellspawn Jews!").<sup>66</sup> Jews are told they will be burned if they do not move away. These texts are aggressive not only in their content but also in their style. A Russian might have authored these texts rather than a local Catholic, because they tell the Jews to move "out of Russia." A local Catholic would probably have written "out of Vil'na," "out of the country," "out of Lithuania," or "out of Poland," and it is hard to imagine a Catholic caring about the presence of Jews in other parts of the empire. Granted, certain texts may have been penned by someone who was not Orthodox or by a barely literate Russian.<sup>67</sup> However, certain threats may have been penned by a Catholic.

Although the threat distributed in Rossieny was written in Russian, according to one Jewish witness, the word *podzhog* was spelled with a *sz* rather than a *zh* and used the apparent Polonism *prigotov'te sebia* (Pol.: *przygotować się*, make ready, be prepared)<sup>68</sup> rather than the Russian *prigotov'tes'*, which would imply that the author was a Polish-speaker.

64 Some historians claim that towards the end of the eighteenth century, the term *evrei* became fixed in official Russian discourse and *zhid* took on a decidedly pejorative meaning: Dolbilov and Miller, *Zapadnye okrainy*, 304. However, Klier believes that these two terms were used interchangeably until the mid-nineteenth century and that *zhid* did not have the negative connotations that it unquestionably gained later: Klier, *Rossiia sobiraet svoikh evreev*, 105–106.

65 File "O naidennykh v g. Vil'ne proklamatsiakh i pis'makh vozmutil'nogo soderzhaniia," *LVIA*, f. 421, ap. 1, b. 3017.

66 Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews*, 11–31.

67 On one of the envelopes, one cross-stroke was used for two letters, *d* and *a*, which is more common in drawing than in calligraphy. An error appears in one of the repeated texts: *bigi* was written instead of *izvergi* (fo. 19). Perhaps when copying the text, the transcriber (fo. 23) accidentally copied *bi* (from *bit*) in line 4 and ended it with the *gi* from *izvergi*. In another text with a different content, there is a spelling mistake (fo. 23) with an extra *p* in *terpenie*.

68 Secret report from the police superintendent of Rossieny District to the governor of Kovno, May 13, 1881, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 21624, l. 23.



In turn, it is not always easy to distinguish threats from warnings. Someone pinned a Russian flyer to the wall of the synagogue in Rossieny warning of a future fire and the recent arrival of a socialist.<sup>69</sup> In other cases it is more likely that it was Jews who posted flyers in public places to warn their coreligionists of danger. At Vištytis (Volkovyshki [Vilkaviškis] District, Suvalki Province) a poster was put up on the chemist's shop wall in Yiddish (*na evreiskom iazyke*) warning local Jews that there were plots afoot to beat them up and burn their houses.<sup>70</sup> In this case there is no doubt that the author was Jewish because, even though there were Gentiles who spoke Yiddish, there were virtually none who could read and write the Hebrew script.

A completely different type of text was found by Vil'na Jews on their synagogue wall in July 1881. Local revolutionaries addressed Jews in Yiddish with their interpretation of events. They alleged that the authorities wished to divert popular wrath from themselves onto the Jews and that the "Nihilists" had nothing to do with the matter.<sup>71</sup>

When the authors of the rumors or threats against Jews could be identified, they usually turned out to be common folk, peasants from small towns and villages. Only a few turned out to be gentlemen. For instance, gendarmes in Augustovo District suspected that a landowner named Sokolovski was inciting the peasantry: whenever he found a newspaper report of a pogrom, he gave it to the peasants to read.<sup>72</sup> In official reports and especially Jewish requests to provide protection from a threatened pogrom or arson attack, clergy are sometimes named as inciting anti-Jewish passions.<sup>73</sup> Some of these accusations may have been true. Thus at Južintai (Kovno Province), Father Rugelevičius

69 Secret report from the police superintendent of Rossieny District to the governor of Kovno, May 18, 1881, *ibid.*, l. 59–60.

70 Report of the chief of the Kal'variia and Volkovyshki Districts Gendarmerie to the chief of the Warsaw District Gendarmes, May 25, 1881, *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1310, l. 161.

71 Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 213.

72 Moreover, gendarmes were suspicious of the fact that landowners had recently begun to meet together very often: Report of the chief of the Administration of Gendarmes of the Suvalki, Augustovo and Seiny Districts to the chief of the Warsaw District Gendarmerie, May 21, 1881, *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1310, l. 140–141.

73 *Ha-melits*, May 31, 1881 (N.S.): 8.

egged peasants on to drive out the Jews.<sup>74</sup> But most often, investigating officers, who as a rule would have no reasons to sympathize with Catholic priests, did not find proof of such accusations. Sometimes the accused clergy were active proponents of temperance,<sup>75</sup> and on occasion Jews may have made such accusations as a means of settling scores. Moreover, the Church hierarchy had most likely received instructions from the secular authorities to order priests to calm the population. Thus the administrator of the Vil'na Diocese instructed priests in May 1881 to teach their parishioners to maintain "good morals in domestic life and live in peace and harmony with all their neighbors despite material or religious differences, strictly respecting the rights of property and the decency of one and all."<sup>76</sup>

All these threats and rumors increased interethnic tension, which sometimes erupted into physical conflict. If we accept D. Horowitz's assertions that the contents of rumors reflect the scale of violence in ethnic disturbances,<sup>77</sup> we would expect to see deadly pogroms in Lithuania in 1881.

#### HATRED TRANSFORMS INTO VIOLENCE

In many cases anti-Jewish violence was accompanied by drunkenness. One of the higher-risk periods was the day conscripts were collected for the army. This was not merely because drunken young men were gathered together in one place. One reason for possible excesses was the widespread belief that Jews evaded conscription and so, for

74 File "Po predstavleniiu idushchago dolzh. Kovenskogo Gubernatora, o podstrekatel'stve nastoiatelem Iuzhinskogo kostela, ksendzom Rugelevichem prikhozhan-krest'ian togo prikhoda protiv evreev," *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1881 m., b. 310. The authorities demanded that the priest be transferred to a poorer parish.

75 Report of the chief of the Administration of Gendarmes of the Troki (Trakai) District, May 12, 1881, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 52, l. 48; secret report from the police superintendent of the Troki District to the governor of Kovno, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap, 1, b. 21624, l. 163.

76 Instruction to deans from the administrator of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Vil'na, May 15, 1881, *LVIA*, f. 380, ap, 101, b. 4922, l. 12.

77 D. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 87.

example, gave incorrect census information or simply hid from police officers enlisting conscripts or opposed them with force.<sup>78</sup> In both earlier and later periods, the gathering of conscripts in towns and cities increased tensions,<sup>79</sup> but even more incidents were expected during the pogrom years of 1881–1882.<sup>80</sup> At the end of summer 1881, the townsfolk of Disna (Dzisna; Vil'na Province), especially the Jews, awaited the conscripts' appearance with anxiety: "the main thing that alarms us is the imminent call up of new conscripts, when masses of people from the peasantry will arrive in the conscription office. During past callups there were always cases of attacks and unruly behavior, which was of no serious significance. However, now, given the population's excited condition, this could take on more dangerous forms."<sup>81</sup> In 1881 at Žiežmariai (Vil'na Province), thanks to efforts by the police, such incidents were avoided,<sup>82</sup> even though the Jews were very much afraid of the drunken mob. However, in 1883 collective violence could not be prevented. A drunken mob of recruits walked around the town, catching every Jew they could and covering them in mud, as well as smashing the windows and shutters of houses. This "bombardment" of Jewish homes continued the next day, and only intervention by the local authorities reined in the youths.<sup>83</sup>

Another risk zone was the market, where conflicts would often

78 Report of the leader of the Minsk District Gentry, Khometovskii, December 20, 1881: "Jewish military service, according to evidence from the Minsk District, Minsk Province," *RGVIA*, f. 400, op. 14, d. 15703, l. 4–16; report from governor general of Vil'na to the interior minister, October 27, 1884, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 otделение, 1882, d. 280, ch. 18, l. 16–18; political overview of the Kal'variia and Volkovyshki Districts for 1882, *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1379, l. 6; *Vilenskii vestnik* 238 (1881); "Iz m. Zhizhmory, Trokskago uezda. (Korresp. 'Vil. vestn.')." *ibid.*, 247 (1881); Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 194.

79 Hurwitz, "Meyn heymshtetl," 293; Grinius, *Atsiminimai ir mintys*, 196–197.

80 B. Kh. [?], "Vil'komir (Kovenskoï gub.) 22 noiabria," *Nedel'naia khornika Voskhoda* 48 (1884): 1367–1368.

81 Appeal from members of the Disna town дума and Jewish merchants to the governor of Vil'na, August 4, 1881, *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 101, b. 4922, l. 106–107.

82 "Iz m. Zhizhmory."

83 *Vilenskii vestnik* 262 (1883). Conscripts rampaged in Vil'na (I. Mazelevskii, "Iz Vil'ny," *Russkii evrei* 46 [1881]: 1816) and Suvalki too (B. Kagan, *Yizkor-Bukh*, 250).

arise and develop into fights.<sup>84</sup> It is often difficult to understand from official reports what sparked the violence. Certain clashes can be reconstructed better than others. On June 30, 1882, several peasants in Anykščiai (Kovno Province) beat a Jew suspected of theft, along with any other Jews they encountered.<sup>85</sup> According to the local authorities, the police would usually halt conflicts that might develop further.

Particular tensions begin to develop in trade after the tsar confirmed his cabinet's Resolution on the Implementation of Provisional Regulations concerning Jews on May 3, 1882, known as the May Ukaz, which stated, among other things, that Jews were forbidden to trade on Sundays and Christian holy days. However, it contained a provision that the closing of Jewish shops would be practiced according to the same rules that applied to Christian shops.<sup>86</sup> In that situation the decision depended on each municipality. In the majority of cities and towns in the Pale, shops could be opened on Sundays for five hours in the afternoon. On the basis of this document, peasants began to pass resolutions completely banning Sunday and holy day trading. Peasants who entered inns on such days were liable to be fined. Jews, of course, cited the same document, showing that trade was banned only during religious services, and they did not react to the peasant resolutions. The situation escalated and, according to local officials, disputes between peasants and Jews had the potential to develop into outbreaks of disorder (*bezporiadki*). Therefore they were obliged to explain to peasants that such resolutions on their part misinterpreted the resolution confirmed by the tsar on May 3, and thus Jews were allowed to trade after church services ended.<sup>87</sup> During these conflicts, not only were Jews beaten but their property was also damaged: goods

84 Report from the head of the Administration of Gendarmes of Kovno Province, October 2, 1882, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, 1882, d. 280, ch. 25, l. 1; official letter from the governor of Vil'na to the governor general of Vil'na, July 8, 1883, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 52, l. 214.

85 Report from the governor of Kovno to governor general of Vil'na, July 27, 1882, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 52, l. 195–196.

86 *Polnoe sobranie zakonov*, vol. 2, 181.

87 File "O sostavlenii krest'ianami Oshmianskago uezda prigovorov o neproizvodstve trgovli v voskresnye i prazdnichnye dni," *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 39, b. 83; report from the governor of Vil'na to the governor general of Vil'na, July 15, 1882, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1882 m., b. 734, l. 1–3.

would be thrown around (or taken), or a house or inn might be ransacked.<sup>88</sup>

Some of these conflicts associated with drunkenness and trade had a common denominator: Christians felt they were superior to Jews and enjoyed the right to ignore normal ways of interaction. For example, they felt they had the right to get goods (including alcohol) from Jews without paying, or to pay less than the price asked.

Indeed, the Russian Jewish press also recorded other types of excess. One publication said that two Jewish homes were ransacked for two nights in a row in the village of Gudeliai (Balkūnai gmina, Suvalki Province). The newspaper published the story under the headline “Pogroms.”<sup>89</sup> Such incidents may indeed be proof of collective hostility developing into collective violence, but they are on too small a scale to be called pogroms.

Religious motives are rarely encountered in rumors or threats or in conflicts themselves. One of the rare exceptions was an incident that took place at Voronovo (Lida District, Vil’na Province). According to the official version, on Sunday, June 19, 1883, during the Catholic feast of Corpus Christi, numerous Jews gathered in Voronovo from nearby towns with their goods. The Jews followed not the peasant resolution shifting the market day from Sundays to Tuesdays but the May Ukaz and did not trade until services ended; they just set up stalls next to the church. However, as prayers drew to a close and the bells rang out, according to evidence given by peasants, which we cannot verify with other sources, the Jews began to beat their scythes, aggravating the peasants. Although the reason for their wrath was not spelled out, it is

88 For example, in the area around Disna: “Po gorodam i selam,” *S-Peterburgskie vedomosti* 139 (1882). In Butrimonys, according to *Russkii evrei*, the local police superintendent did not permit a pogrom to break out: Rozeiman, “Iz Vil’ny,” *Russkii evrei* 32 (1882): 1231. *Nedel’naia khronika Voskhoda* reported on minor incidents in the Volkovyshki and Oszmiany Districts: R. [?], “Suvalki, 10-go fevralia 1882 g.,” *Nedel’naia khronika Voskhoda* 9 (1882): 218; M. Rubinovskii, “M-ko Iv’e (Vilen. gub.), 23 fevralia,” *Nedel’naia khronika Voskhoda* 9 (1883): 268–269. However, certain stories reported in the Jewish press were exaggerated. *Rassvet* reported that poor Christian women in Vil’na were handing out poisoned cakes and sweets to Jewish children: *Rassvet* 18 (1881): 758.

89 “Pogromy,” *Rassvet* 27 (1882): 1023. No reasons for this violent act were mentioned in that article.

likely that peasant religious sentiments were insulted: the Jews failed to respect the religious ceremonies. Admittedly, one pretext for more serious conflict was one peasant's failure to agree on a price with a Jew selling scythes, and this led to an argument. After this the peasants upended several Jewish wagons, and a fight broke out. A local policeman restored order. While he was sorting matters out with a Jewish representative, his wife thought he was being beaten up and so called on peasants to come and drive away the Jews. Although Jewish tradesmen claimed they had suffered damage totaling 508 rubles, local officials accepted peasant claims that any damage had been minimal. The local officials' interpretation of this incident reveals a clear desire to excuse the peasants and blame the outbreak on Jewish behavior. The officials alleged that if the Jewish tradesmen had answered the peasants' questions politely, nothing would have happened; the Jews registered a complaint against the local policeman because he had insisted that trading not commence before the service ended.<sup>90</sup>

The types of anti-Jewish excess discussed here, of course, were not the only kind. Thus a conflict broke out at the railway station in Kaišiadorys on May 12, 1881, between railway workmen and Jews after several Jews refused a gendarme officer's instruction to leave the station and the officer appealed to workmen for assistance. Admittedly, only two men took part in this fight.<sup>91</sup> Sometimes conflicts between peasants developed into anti-Jewish excesses, as in the Rokiškis Rural District case (Kovno Province), where during a peasant fight, the weaker party took refuge in the quarters of a Jew called Miller. Then the attackers began to ransack homes and beat up Jews they found inside while yelling, "We have to beat the Jews."<sup>92</sup>

The anti-Jewish excesses that took place in Lithuania were short-lived. Although the conflict's duration was usually not recorded, the accounts imply that these outbreaks did not last for more than a few hours. However, from May 1 to 7, 1882, in Disna District, "Christian youths who had been observed stealing" ransacked a Jewish house

90 File "O proizshedsikh v m. Voronov, Lidskogo uezda, bezporiadkakh mezhdue khristianskim i evreiskim naseleniem (1883)," *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 40, b. 60.

91 File "O bezporiadkakh na st. Kashedary, Libavo-Romenskoi zheleznai dorogi," *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 75.

92 Report from the governor of Kovno to the governor general of Vil'na, April 30, 1882, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1882 m., b. 61, l. 1–2.

four times. Local police arrested ten culprits and handed them over to the magistrates.<sup>93</sup>

Thus most of the anti-Jewish incidents that took place in the early 1880s were minor, and in previous and later years, they would not have attracted much attention from officials, especially higher-ranking ones. However, the tense atmosphere in the southern parts of the empire forced officials in Lithuania too to observe Christian–Jewish relations more carefully and record every incident. This is probably why more is known about the events of 1881–1882 than those during “normal” years before or afterward. Alongside the incidents briefly described here and many other minor ones, there were several larger cases that took on a mass character.

### POGROMS

In order to classify a given incident as a pogrom, there must be sufficient information about it. Unfortunately, on occasions not enough sources are available.<sup>94</sup> During the height of ethnic tension in 1881, *Ha-melits* reported that in a village near Šeduva, Gentiles destroyed a Jewish house, and in nearby villages Jewish windows were smashed.<sup>95</sup> Presumably in this case the violence was on a pogrom scale. However, this incident cannot be confirmed from other sources, including official ones, and, bearing in mind that local officials reported all such incidents scrupulously, there are grounds to suspect that the newspaper account exaggerated events. Certain incidents may be reconstructed in greater detail.

There can be no doubt that the Balbieriškis and Prienai incidents qualify as pogroms. Both the imperial law-enforcement institutions and the Jewish press gave these incidents as much attention as they gave pogroms in southern Russia, although the scale of these incidents was obviously much smaller.<sup>96</sup>

93 File “Po raportu Disnenskogo ispravnika o delaemykh, v nekotorykh mestnostakh Disnenskogo uезда, napadeniiakh na evreev,” *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 39, b. 58.

94 For example, in descriptions of events in Molėtai (Maliaty) in 1884 or Kudirkos Naumištis (Vladislavov) in 1882: B. Kagan, *Yidishe shtet*, 263, 292.

95 *Ha-melits*, May 31, 1881 (N.S.): 8.

96 The Jewish press compared the pogrom in Balbieriškis to anti-Jewish violence in the south (K.M. [?], “Bal’verzhishtski, Suvalskoi gub. (Korrespondentsiia ‘Russkogo evreia’),” *Russkii evrei* 40 (1881): 1577), when the Warsaw prosecu-

The conflict in Balbieriškis (Mariampol' District, Suvalki Province) began like many other anti-Jewish outbursts in Lithuania in the early 1880s. On September 20, 1881 (NS), Catholic crowds gathered for a religious festival. The reports given by the Hebrew newspaper *Ha-tsfira* and local police accounts differ slightly. *Ha-tsfira*'s correspondent Reuven Arie Leib Hellman claims that the Christians, mostly workmen from local manors, began to attack the Jews without any pretext and ransack their houses; they also smashed synagogue windows. Several of those attacked apparently almost died.<sup>97</sup> The victims asserted that the peasants had planned this action in advance, but the argument they gave about a minor incident that had happened a few days earlier, in which peasants had upturned a Jew's fruit cart and a fight had ensued,<sup>98</sup> is hardly enough to confirm their assertion. Local policemen and, later, other officials described events slightly differently.<sup>99</sup> Around three o'clock, after the Catholic service, a conflict broke out in a Jewish shop during payment for goods, and this turned into jostling. Because Jews were initially in the majority, they chased the peasants as far as the church, but the peasants quickly regrouped, armed themselves with anything at hand, and attacked the Jews, who fled. This pogrom reflects certain typical features of Christian and Jewish collective behavior: Christians felt injured and, seeing that officials were unwilling to take their side,<sup>100</sup> or sometimes just wishing to

tor claimed there would be no need to pay much attention to this event but for the pogroms in the southern provinces (the prosecutor, Warsaw Palace of Justice report to the minister of justice, October 5, 1881, *RGIA*, f. 1405, ap. 80, b. 4364, l. 1.).

97 *Ha-tsfira* 39 (1881): 307.

98 Copy of the report from the Suvalki District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Warsaw Palace of Justice, September 29, 1881, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 80, d. 4364, l. 12.

99 Reports of the chief of the Mariampol' and Volkovyshki District Gendarmerie to the chief of the Warsaw District Gendarmes, September 22, 1881, April 13 and 14, 1882; report of the chief of the Suvalki, Augusto, and Seiny District Gendarmerie to the chief of the Warsaw District Gendarmes, May 21, 1882 (NS), *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1310, l. 280, 310, 311, 314; report of the chief of the Mariampol' and Volkovyshki District Gendarmerie to the Police Department, April 14, 1882, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, 1882, d. 280, ch. 18, l. 3, file "O bezporiadkakh mezhdru evreiami i khristianami v posade Bal'verzhishkakh Suvalkskoi gubernii," *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 80, d. 4364.



“put the Jews in their place,” they would not only use physical force against *particular* Jews but also attack any member of this ethno-confessional community they came across in public. Furthermore, they would often use violence against Jewish property and places of worship. Sometimes Jews would use physical force to defend collectively an injured coreligionist, but as we know, they did not use violence against other members of another community and never ransacked Christian property, let alone places of worship. Jews might have felt it was wrong, but another explanation is also possible: a certain informal social hierarchy existed, and the Jews knew their place within it.

At that time the peasants began to ransack Jewish houses, mostly those standing on the market square. Twenty-five to thirty Jewish houses had their windows and doors smashed, their furniture destroyed, and other items wrecked; goods were thrown out into the street. Other sources say that fifty-seven Jewish buildings of various types were damaged, including the synagogue.<sup>101</sup> Nine Jews were injured during the pogrom; a doctor found that the injuries for eight of them were minor. According to various sources, the savagery was halted at 4:30 or perhaps as late as 7 p.m., thanks to the efforts of the local authorities and especially the parish priest (as *Ha-tsifra*’s correspondent acknowledged). In their correspondence, officials mention that 2,000 peasants persecuted the Jews.<sup>102</sup>

As was usual in such cases, the tension persisted long after the pogrom, and minor attacks on Jews took place around Balbieriškis.<sup>103</sup> Local officials claimed that rumors of a new attack were being circulated by the Jews themselves and that they paid a local scribe to write a report about the danger. However, official reports also show that even the slightest incident, which at first had no interethnic traits, could still develop into a pogrom. On March 29, 1882, two Jews start

100 During a later incident in Suvalki Province that took place after a peasant was pushed by a Jew and fell down, a peasant mob shouted: “when our brother hits a Yid, there’s as many police as you like, but when a Yid beats up some guy, there’s not a copper to be seen”: Report of the chief of the Mariampol’ and Volkovyshki District Gendarmerie to the chief of the Warsaw District Gendarmes, August 13, 1883 (NS), *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1310, l. 475–476.

101 B. Kagan, *Yidishe shtet*, 35.

102 Around 4,000 Catholics in all gathered there.

103 Copy of a report by the Suvalki District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Warsaw Palace of Justice, October 8, 1881 (NS), *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 80, d. 4364, l. 5.

ed arguing in an inn near the church during Catholic Mass. Ona Krutulytė, who was outside the church, saw a peasant between the two fighting Jews and began shouting, "The Jews are beating a man up!" These words soon caused consternation inside the church, and many peasants headed toward the exit, intending to "teach the Jews a lesson." The parishioners calmed down only after the priest leaped into the pulpit to pacify them.

There was a danger that anti-Jewish violence might break out in nearby places, primarily Prienai, but as a precaution, the authorities increased the number of policemen on duty. In autumn 1881 they managed to prevent any incident in this town, but on August 3, 1882 (NS), a pogrom did erupt there.

That day around 4,000 peasants from the Prienai parish and Troki and Kalvarija Districts gathered in town for a Catholic religious feast. Descriptions from various sources concur on many points.<sup>104</sup> However, there are certain differences of interpretation, for example, concerning

104 Numerous sources describe and interpret events in Prienai: File "O evreiskikh bezporiadkakh," *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 82, d. 9007; *Ha-melits* 31 (1882); *ibid.*, 22 (1884): 384; file "O evreiskikh bezporiadkakh po Suvalkskoi gubernii," *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, 1882, d. 280, ch. 11; Ia. Idelevich, "Preny, Suvalkskoi gub.," *Russkii evrei* 32 (1882): 1230–1231; G.K. [?], "Preny, Suvalkskoi gub.," *ibid.*, 33 (1882): 1263–1264; R.S. [?], "Suwałki, 15 sierpnia," *Kraj* 8 (1882): 4; "Vnutrennie novosti," *Golos* 216 (1882); G. Krukovskii, "Pogrom v Prenakh. Popytki podzhoga," *Rassvet* 33 (1882): 12754–12755; "Pogrom v Prenakh. Pozhar v Olitakh," *ibid.*, 12754–12755; "Kh. V." [?], "Sudebnaia khronika. Delo ob antievreiskikh bezporiadkakh, byvshikh v g. Prenakh 3-go avgusta 1882 g.," *Russkii evrei* 18 (1884): 25–30; 19 (1884): 23–29; R. Miller, "Preny, Suvalk. gub., 4-go avgusta," *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 32 (1882); Ger. K-n [?], "Preny, Suvalk. gub., 4-go avgusta," *ibid.*, 33 (1882): 893–895; Ia. Idelevich, "Preny, Suvalkskoi gub., 4-go avgusta," *ibid.*, 895; B. Finskii, "Sopotskin, 9-go avgusta," *ibid.*, 895–896; "Iz chastnogo pis'ma. Preny, 4-go avgusta," *ibid.*, 896–897; "Iz drugikh gazet," *ibid.*, 897–898; Nabliudatel' [?], "Preny (Suvalk. gub.), 15-oktiabria," *ibid.*, 43 (1882): 1154–1155; Germ. K...n [?], "Kovno, 20 iunia," *ibid.*, 26 (1883): 672–674; "Peterburgskaia letopis'," *ibid.*, 16 (1884): 443–445; "Peterburgskaia letopis'," *ibid.*, 17 (1884): 465–467; "Sudebnaia khronika. Delo ob antievreiskikh bezporiadkakh v g. Prenakh 3-go avgusta 1882 g.," *ibid.*, 17 (1884): 479–483; "Peterburgskaia letopis'," *ibid.*, 18 (1884): 497; G.K. [?], "Korrespondentsii. Mariampol', 20-go apreliia," *ibid.*, 18 (1884): 498–500; "Sudebnaia khronika. Delo ob antievreiskikh bezporiadkakh byvshikh v g. Prenakh 3-go avgusta 1882 g.," *ibid.*, 18 (1884): 511–515; "Sudebnaia khronika. Delo ob antievreiskikh bezporiadkakh byvshikh v g. Prenakh 3-go avgusta 1882 g.," *ibid.*, 20 (1884): 569–570; B. Kagan, *Yidishe shtet*, 419–420.

the beginning of the pogrom. The Jewish sources claim that the pogrom was planned and prepared for in advance.<sup>105</sup> Some sources suggest that before August 3, peasants had threatened to settle scores with Jews during the coming festivities. Such a possibility cannot be entirely ruled out. Granted, it is very likely that, under the influence of pogroms in other parts of the empire, Jews expected such threats. While such facts may reflect certain Christians' attitudes, it is unlikely they indicate the existence of any organized groups who might plan a pogrom.

According to the official account, the incident began in the market with a conflict between a Christian woman and a Jewish woman buying apples, and it might not have escalated into mass violence if a Jew had not hit a Christian with a stick. At first the violence was confined to the market square, but later a mob of about 300 peasants grabbed sticks and stones and divided into groups to ransack nearby streets. According to one witness, the bloodied body of a Christian woman lying in the town square further incited the mob.<sup>106</sup> Data compiled by the authorities, a great wealth of witness accounts, and articles in the press suggest that not only were Jewish house and shops destroyed but so were goods; there were also cases of Jewish property being stolen.<sup>107</sup> Although Jews who had been well informed about pogroms in southern Russia and Warsaw quickly hid after the violence began, some were wounded.<sup>108</sup> Sources report different lengths of time that the pogrom lasted. The shortest duration reported was one-and-a-half

105 *Ha-melits* 31 (1882); *ibid.*, 22 (1884): 384. The same assertions appear in many other Jewish periodicals. In descriptions of the Prienai pogrom, Jewish newspapers frequently stress that the peasants were sober, implying that this was no spontaneous act by people under the influence, but a deliberate one.

106 "Kh. V." [?], "Sudebnaia khronika," 25–26. It later transpired that it was unclear who cast the stone at her.

107 File "O evreiskikh bezporiadkakh," *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 82, d. 9007; File "O evreiskikh bezporiadkakh po Suvalskoi gub.," *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, 1882, d. 280, ch. 11; report of a justice of the peace in one part of the Troki District to the governor of Vil'na, August 8, 1882, *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 101, b. 4922, l. 195–196; reports of the chief of the Mariampol' and Vladislavo District Gendarmerie to the chief of the Warsaw District Gendarmes, August 7 and 11, 1882, *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1310, l. 410, 411. Witness accounts also note that one Jewish woman "redeemed herself" by offering money to the mob.

108 According to certain accounts, some of these sought refuge in Christian houses: "Iz chastnogo pis'ma," 897.

hours,<sup>109</sup> while the longest was six hours, that is, until 8–9 p.m.<sup>110</sup> The most commonly cited length was three to four hours, with the pogrom beginning at 2 or 3 p.m., an hour or more after the end of Mass. During the Prienai pogrom, according to various sources, between fifteen and twenty Jews were injured.<sup>111</sup> Between fifty-five and seventy dwelling houses were damaged, along with eleven to seventeen shops and eight inns. Jews assessed their total losses at approximately 20,000 rubles, although the sum noted in official sources is half that size. According to *Ha-melits* the perpetrators, whom in one case it calls "Poles," were former soldiers;<sup>112</sup> in another case it calls them "savage peasants."<sup>113</sup> *Ha-melits* stated that the perpetrators did not forget the "rituals" typical of such situations and "made snow out of feathers and down."<sup>114</sup> Certain descriptions stress the presence of young people in the raging mob,<sup>115</sup> which is essentially confirmed by the ages of thirty-three accused, as discussed in the press: although there were people aged between thirty and fifty years old, nineteen of the accused were twenty-one years old or younger.<sup>116</sup>

Most accounts mention attempts by local policemen, other officials, and most importantly, the parish priest, Father Kravchinski, to hold back the mob.<sup>117</sup> Although sometimes the priest's actions are credited with stopping the pogrom, the most common version says that the mob ignored these people and that the priest was physically attacked.

Conflicts at markets similar to that which took place in Prienai on August 3, 1882, were not rare.<sup>118</sup> In 1888 in Porecze, a mob ignored the

109 G.K. [?], "Preny, Suvalskoi gub.," *Russkii evrei* 33 (1882): 1263.

110 R.S. [?], "Suwałki," 4; G. Krukovskii, "Pogrom v Prenakh," 12754.

111 Although *Ha-melits* wrote of fatal casualties, official accounts mention only one seriously injured person, a Jewish woman.

112 *Ha-melits* 31 (1882).

113 Ibid., 38 (1882).

114 Editorial note: *Ha-melits* 31 (1882).

115 "Kh. V." [?], "Sudebnaia khronika," 26.

116 Germ. K...n [?], "Kovno, 20 iunia," 673. There were forty-eight defendants in all, but some of them did not appear in court.

117 Apparently the policeman even received death threats: *Russkii evrei* 19 (1884): 24.

118 Rumors arose in July 1884 of a new wave of pogroms in Prienai, but this did not take place, either because of the local authorities' actions or because the rumors were false: Report of the chief of the Mariampol' and Vladislavov District Gendarmerie to the chief of the Warsaw District Gendarmes, July 19, 1884 (NS), *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1792, l. 42–43.

instructions of a local policeman following a similar conflict over apples, disarmed him, and threw Jewish goods around the market.<sup>119</sup> Why the incident in Prienai turned into a full-fledged pogrom is not so easy to explain. The descriptions of the pogrom provided by various witnesses, the official reports, and the analysis of the way the pogrom played out all fail to give any clear answer to this question.

Quite interesting official interpretations of this outbreak of mass violence appeared after the pogrom. According to the governor of Suvalki, the peasants did not like the Jews because the latter exploited and impoverished them and most importantly, because Jews in the Kingdom of Poland were not subjected to the same restrictions as those dwelling in the Pale of Settlement.<sup>120</sup> The idea that the pogroms were occasioned by unsuitable behavior by the Jews themselves (their attempts to “exploit” the common people<sup>121</sup>) had grown among imperial officials of various ranks even before the events in Prienai. The behavior of certain members of the mob indicated that they might have had economic motives—that is, that they might have sought to punish Jews who made money off the peasants. This is how the ransacking of Brisker’s house might be interpreted after one of the mob said, “a wealthy Jew lives here, come here.”<sup>122</sup> However, there is no further evidence to support such a supposition, and during the subsequent trial, one Christian witness stressed that Jewish trade in Prienai was fair.<sup>123</sup> A second circumstance connected with the issue of status is more interesting. In principle, the version advanced by the governor

119 Aleksandr Moro, “Notatki codzienne i gospodarskie na rok 1888,” *LMAVB RS*, f. 29–574, l. 56.

120 Report from the governor of Suvalki to the minister of interior, August 11, 1882, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, 1882, d. 280, ch. 11, l. 33–34. Most likely here the author had in mind the fact that following Alexander Wielkopolski’s 1862 reforms, Jews in the Kingdom of Poland effectively obtained the same rights as other subjects in this part of the empire, while their coreligionists in the Pale of Settlement continued to face discrimination.

121 Report of the chief of the Administration of Gendarmes of the Suvalki, Augustovo, and Seiny Districts to the chief of the Warsaw District Gendarmerie, February 5, 1882 (NS), *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1236, l. 1.

122 Germ. K...n [?], “Kovno, 20 iunia,” 674. This demonstrates quite a different rationale—the house of a wealthy Jew was a good target because it contained more valuables to steal.

123 G.K. [?], “Korrespondentii. Mariampol’, 30-go apreliia,” *Nedel’naia khronika Voskhoda* 18 (1884): 498–499.

of Suvalki may appear quite improbable and raise a suspicion that this was his view rather than the peasants'. After all, the legal status of Jews was the government's prerogative, and any wish to change it required an appeal to the authorities. However, the view that the peasants were "punishing" the Jews for their inappropriate legal status might not seem so absurd, especially given that there was a widespread conviction that Jews could buy anything, including "privileges." Even so, if we are to believe peasants actually thought that way, this circumstance could hardly have been important in provoking the Prienai pogrom.

It is more likely that the reason for the Prienai pogrom lies in the general "pogrom atmosphere" prevalent within the Russian Empire in the early 1880s, that is, the conviction of some Christians that the tsar allowed them to beat up Jews and ransack their property. Such a conviction was strengthened by the fact that until August 1882, those accused of the pogrom in Balbieriškis remained unpunished. Even local officials admitted that this factor bolstered peasant beliefs that beating Jews and ransacking their property were not punishable offenses. In such circumstances, one spark—such as a Jewish act that Christians interpreted as provocative—may have sufficed to ignite large-scale collective violence. Moreover, the course of the Prienai pogrom (the destruction of goods found in a Jewish shop or the commandeering of Jewish property) would lead us to assume that some in the mob behaved in this way out of simple hooliganism or out of a desire for an easy profit.

#### THE AUTHORITIES ACT

In the second half of the nineteenth century, in both the imperial capitals and the Northwestern Region, officials regarded Jews in various ways. Bureaucrats who were slightly more liberal proposed first reforming laws applying to Jews to encourage a "merging" and a "rapprochement." Others asserted that first the Jews should merge and make their own rapprochement and only then could some of the discriminatory legislation be repealed. Officials criticized the Jews for their supposed "exploitation" of the peasantry, "unuseful" economic activities, and undermining of popular morality. In the early 1880s certain local officials proposed adopting more proactive measures and, after facilitating the purchase of land for peasants, forming a wealthy

peasant class that could resist Jewish influence.<sup>124</sup> Thus not surprisingly, local officials often blamed unsuitable behavior by Jews for the anti-Jewish excesses that took place in the early 1880s. The local official press, such as *Vilenskii vestnik*, also propagated negative images of Jews. For example, Jews were accused not only of cheating but also of having no respect for peasants, that is, those who provided them “with food and drink” from their labors.<sup>125</sup> Instructions from St. Petersburg could also often confirm the Judeophobic inclinations of local officialdom. For instance, in 1880, on the basis of confidential information, the interior minister instructed local authorities to provide data on collections of money among the Jews. He claimed that “all Jewish capitalists have allegedly joined the worldwide Jewish Kahal, whose founding aims are quite inimical to Christians, contributing larger or smaller sums of money, and in their own homes Jews set up circles devoted to collecting money for the Kahal and even supply material support for revolutionary parties.”<sup>126</sup>

However, it was one thing to dislike Jews, accuse them of various misdemeanors, and discriminate against them; it was quite another to organize pogroms. The central authorities had no rational motives for organizing such action. Uncontrollable popular violence not only ran contrary to the “police mentality” typical of many officials but also undermined the prestige of the empire abroad, made it harder for the state to obtain credit, and caused the economic situation to deteriorate.

In 1881 the imperial authorities had even less motive for fostering mass violence than they had at any other time. The assassination of Alexander II unquestionably gave the imperial ruling elite a serious political shock. Not only did the elite have to live through the distress they had suffered, but they were also afraid of possible consequences. Only later did the central authorities come to the interpretation that the pogroms were caused by Jewish exploitation of the peasantry.<sup>127</sup> At the beginning, the authorities sought to find traces of the revolutionaries. The correspondence of civil servants over various ranks buzze

124 A copy of the secret report from the governor of Grodno to the minister of interior, June 20, 1881, *LVI*A, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 31, l. 29.

125 *Vilenskii vestnik* 116 (1881).

126 Secret letter from the minister of interior to governors, April 6, 1880, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 21395, l. 1; Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 1.

127 Berk, *Year of Crisis*, 57–64; Aronson, *Troubled Waters*, 233.

with phrases about "malicious persons" who whipped up the populace.<sup>128</sup> Lower-ranking police officers were instructed to watch the popular mood carefully and see whether "any vicious rumors are spreading among the population of your districts or press appeals for the disruption of social order and the established regime or anything undermining confidence in the government."<sup>129</sup> The authorities were particularly afraid of rumors that Alexander II had been killed by landowners who were dissatisfied with his reforms and intended to reintroduce serfdom.<sup>130</sup>

The authorities in Lithuania and other provinces of the western borderlands had additional reason to fear any mass social action. Memories of the 1863–1864 Uprising remained fresh; lower-level official reports sometimes mentioned that there were not only threats against the Jews but also against Russians and even the tsar.<sup>131</sup> In other words, officials had reason to be afraid that the anti-Jewish movement in Lithuania would have a "side effect."

Unfortunately, little study has been made thus far of the views and policies of Governor General Tottleben of Vil'na. Thus it is difficult to interpret the motives for his actions after the danger of pogroms increased. First it should be noted that, in his opinion, Jews, unlike Poles, submitted more readily to Russian cultural influence, and "in their hearts they do not like Poles," although they could easily submit to Polish influence if it became a dominant force.<sup>132</sup> Thus the governor

128 Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, 57; Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 120–127.

129 Official letter from the governor of Kovno to the police superintendent of Rossieny District, March 14, 1881, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap, 1, b. 21624, l. 3.

130 Official letter from the minister of interior to governors, March 27, 1881, *RGIA*, f. 1282, op. 1, d. 676, l. 6; official letter from the governor of Kovno to justices of the peace, the head of the police in the city of Kovno, and police superintendents of all districts, April 1881, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap, 1, b. 21624, l. 11. See also file: "Po predstavleniiu Vilenskogo Gubernatora, o khodiashchei molve mezhd u krest'ianami, chto za predstoiashchei koronatsiei budut razdeleny vse zemli mezhd u vsemi sosloviami porovnu," *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1882 m., b. 48.

131 Secret report from the police superintendent of Rossieny District to the governor of Kovno, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap, 1, b. 21624, l. 109–110; secret report of the chief of the Mariampol' and Volkovyshki District Gendarmerie to the Chief of the Warsaw District Gendarmes, May 25, 1881 (NS), *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1310, l. 162.

132 Confidential report from the governor general of Vil'na to the minister of interior, July 8, 1882, *LVIA*, f. 378, ap. 219, b. 706, l. 7–8.



general of Vil'na apparently viewed the Jews as a more reliable element than the Poles.

Probably the most important period for interpreting the effectiveness of the actions of Tottleben and the local authorities as a whole in the face of pogroms is the period from March to May 1881, when Alexander II was killed and the first pogroms erupted in southern Russia.<sup>133</sup>

As early as March 3, 1881, the official local newspaper, *Vilenskii vestnik*, blamed not only various dregs of society for the death of the tsar but also "certain Jews."<sup>134</sup> However, after Vil'na Jews showed their dissatisfaction with the publication, the editor claimed in the next issue that he was referring only to those people of Jewish nationality "who, alas, like other persons, have become enchanted by participation in political activities." The editor added that he had absolutely no doubt that most Jews were loyal subjects: "We are well aware of the solid practical consciousness and calm manners of Jews, especially those dwelling in our Northwestern Region, and their patriotic sentiments and loyalty to the Sovereign."<sup>135</sup> The March 3 mention of Jews in the newspaper, of course, reflects the view then widespread in the press of Jews as an anti-government element.<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, this might be interpreted by readers as blaming the Jews for the death of the tsar. It is easy to understand that such accusations might encourage violence against Jews. Admittedly, we have been unable to find assertions in official correspondence that the press provoked anti-Jewish excesses in the Northwestern Region,<sup>137</sup> but the authorities did blame publications such as *Novorossiiskii telegraf* for the pogroms in southern Russia.<sup>138</sup>

133 Grodno Province lies outside the geographical boundaries of this research but will be discussed here because it was directly subordinate to the governor general of Vil'na.

134 "S.-Peterburg, 2-go marta," *Vilenskii vestnik* 45 (1881).

135 *Vilenskii vestnik* 46 (1881).

136 Klier, "The Russian Press," 203. As in the 1882 Report, the governor of Grodno listed Jewish youth and Catholic clergy as the most unreliable social elements: *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1883 m., b. 218, l. 7.

137 Klier, "The Russian Press," 199–221.

138 It is interesting to note that in 1882, *Vilenskii Vestnik* no longer contained articles about local Jewish fear of pogroms, whereas in 1881 there were many such reports. Perhaps the editor stopped printing these himself, or on instructions from the authorities, on the grounds that such reports might actually spark further anti-Jewish excesses.

After the pogrom in Elizavetgrad in mid-April 1881, the interior minister instructed the authorities in the Northwestern Region too to keep an eye on Christian and Jewish communities and report on the situation by telegraph.<sup>139</sup> Thus local officials understood that the central authorities were watching the situation and that they would be held responsible for whatever might happen in their locality. Even though the governors' reports assert that there was no threat of pogroms, at that time, as noted above, various rumors were spreading. Thus it is not surprising that on May 2, Totleben instructed military commanders to assist the civilian authorities if there were any "clashes between Christians and Jews."<sup>140</sup> By the beginning of May, certain local officials, such as the governor of Grodno, took precautionary measures to prevent possible pogroms in Brest-Litovsk and Belostok (Białystok). He visited the places where various rumors were spreading, and in Brest he transferred the site of the market, providing for twenty-five Cossacks to be there when the market was held, and in Belostok he asked an infantry regiment marching nearby to rest in the town on market day.<sup>141</sup> The newly appointed interior minister, Ignat'ev, gave clear instructions on May 6 that the authorities had the duty not only to put down any outbreaks of unrest but also to prevent them from starting.<sup>142</sup> That same day, as if reacting to the interior minister's instructions, Totleben formulated quite detailed instructions on how his subordinates should act in order to prevent possible clashes and put down incipient excesses. He also provided for the use of the army.<sup>143</sup> For this reason the governors of Vitebsk, Mogilev, Minsk, Courland, and Livland were familiarized with this circular.<sup>144</sup> At the same time, an address was drafted from the governor general to the

139 Telegram from the minister of interior, April 18, 1881, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 52, l. 1–3.

140 Order for the army of the Vil'na military district, May 2, 1882, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 52, l. 140.

141 Report from the governor of Grodno to the governor general of Vil'na, May 5, 1881, *ibid.*, l. 16–17.

142 "Pravitel'stvennaya soobshcheniia," *Vilenskii vestnik* 95 (1881); Gessen, *Istoriia evreev*, 330.

143 Circular from the governor general of Vil'na to governors, May 6, 1881, *LVIA*, f. 378, ap. 219, b. 702, l. 3–7. It should be noted that the governor general was familiar with the rumors and had received Jewish appeals for protection.

144 Official letter from the governor general of Vil'na to governors of Minsk, Mogilev, Vitebsk, Courland, and Livland, May 6, 1881, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 52, l. 9.

general population,<sup>145</sup> which was to be published only where the public “was anxious.” This can be explained on the basis of a slightly later circular sent by Ignat’ev to the governors. The interior minister warned governors that they should avoid written addresses to peasants because any carelessly worded phrase might elicit very different interpretations.<sup>146</sup> However, this address was published in *Vilenskii vestnik* on May 16.<sup>147</sup> The public was encouraged to halt the spread of various rumors and help find those who were whipping up society and, when disturbances arose, not to join the mob for the sake of curiosity.

Officials of various ranks reacted to the interior minister’s instructions by traveling around their provinces and noting the state of relations between Christians and Jews. The authorities investigated Jewish complaints that they were being threatened. (Granted, as noted earlier, it usually turned out that there was no danger. On occasion Jews were even accused of spreading rumors themselves in the hope of obtaining protection from the authorities.) Local authorities considered countermeasures most intensively in May and December 1881 and April–June 1882.<sup>148</sup> The tensest state of affairs, from the author-

145 *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 52, l. 8.

146 Circular from the minister of interior to governors, May 23, 1881, *ibid.*, l. 53. Such fears were not entirely groundless. Ordinary people did indeed sometimes read official texts differently from the way that their authors had intended them to be read. Thus following the pogrom in Belostok on June 1–3, 1906, an official proclamation put up in the town threatened that strict measures would be taken in the event of another pogrom. The populace interpreted “another” as meaning that attacking Jews had previously been permitted: witness evidence, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 78–79. The central authorities were also worried that certain newspaper articles severely criticized the actions of local authorities when pogroms took place and instructed the censors not to allow such articles: Circular of the head of the Supreme Press Authority to governors, August 1, 1881, *RGIA*, f. 777, op. 3, 1881, d. 8, l. 122.

147 “Obrashchenie general-ad’iutanta grafa Totlebena k zhiteliam Severo-zapadnago kraia,” *Vilenskii vestnik* 102 (1881).

148 Files “Po telegramme Ministra Vnutrennikh Del o nabliudanii za Khristianskim i Evreiskim naseleniem s tsel’iu predupredit’ bezporiadki,” *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 52; “O stolknoveniakh mezhdru evreiami i khristianami i o rasprostranennykh raznykh slukhakh, podlozhnykh pis’makh, i proklamatsiakh, podstrekaushchikh k izbieniiu evreev,” *GARF*, f. 110, op. 24, d. 1310; “Prikaz po voiskam okruga za No 93 v sluchae stolknoveniia mezhdru evreiskim i khristianskim naseleniem,” *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 21624; “O merakh presecheniia evreiskikh pogromov,” *LVIA*, f. 380, ap. 101, b. 4922. On the policy of central government, see Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 91–127.

ities' point of view, developed in Grodno Province in December 1881 following the fights in Belostok on December 7 and the Warsaw pogrom. Vil'na also received special attention from the authorities, along with the major towns of Grodno Province. Most tension arose in the large towns. Thus, according to Jewish memoirs, life was very tense in Minsk, too.<sup>149</sup> At that time, officials communicated among themselves particularly intensively by telegraph. In December 1881 the authorities once more drafted addresses to the general public, informing people of the governor general's instruction to send in the army, wherever required, and his instruction for people not to remain in the streets in cases of public disturbance. Although ill will towards Jews is occasionally reflected in bureaucratic correspondence (instructions call for keeping an eye on Jews as well as Christians; there is mention of Jewish inclination to exploit peasants), officials of various ranks unquestionably made considerable effort to prevent anti-Jewish violence. Even if officials did not act out of sincere conviction, they did so in order to preserve their jobs. Warnings were sent from St. Petersburg, often stressing the personal responsibility that officials held for the state of their provinces. On May 23, 1881, Interior Minister Ignat'ev warned governors that a repetition of the disorders (*bezporiadki*) "would not be tolerated,"<sup>150</sup> and a year later, on May 15, 1882, an imperial decree stated directly that governors were personally responsible for implementing measures on time.<sup>151</sup>

Certain important measures taken by the authorities should also be noted. In some towns additional policemen were put on duty, and in certain places they were instructed to deal with the public more politely. In anticipation of possible clashes, lists were drawn up of places where disturbances might occur, and in line with the interior minister's instructions, care was taken to ensure the army resided in such places during summer, a time when soldiers usually left the towns to take part in training exercises, or the local authorities took care to see where they could summon military assistance in case of disturbances. Telegraph connections were established quickly between the larger centers and military training camps. In December 1881 the governor

149 Klińska, *Aus dem Schtetl*, 217.

150 Circular to governors, May 23, 1881, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 52, l. 53.

151 Decree, May 15, 1882, *ibid.*, l. 160; copy: *YIVO*, RG 30 (Russian and Soviet Union), Box 2, Folder 22a (pages unnumbered).

of Grodno summoned factory owners and instructed them to deal with their workers in such a way that they would not become involved in anti-Jewish activities.

Certain officials demonstrated a sincere concern with public order. On May 20, 1882, the governor of Grodno appealed to the governor general to increase penalties for those taking part in mass disturbances. As the governor noted, existing laws did not guarantee that all culprits would be prosecuted, especially in Grodno Province, where a shortage of policemen made it difficult to collect sufficient evidence for prosecutions. Failure to punish culprits would encourage them to commit further crimes.<sup>152</sup>

On the basis of official reports, they at least managed to quell disturbances successfully. The Belostok disturbances of December 7, 1881, were brought to an end when a local policeman summoned a cavalry patrol to restore order. Sometimes the authorities would react to the slightest conflict, as when one drunken Russian colonist was arrested and given twenty lashes for intimidating Jews on market day.<sup>153</sup>

The evidence presented here shows that at least higher-ranking officials (the governor general and governors), and in many instances even lower-ranking officers, made considerable effort to prevent disturbances, and when unrest broke out, they would try to restore order as quickly as possible. However, it is hard to measure the effectiveness of the authorities' actions in cases involving rising tensions, especially when such tensions did not break out into public disorder.

On more than one occasion, officials could not agree what measures to take to prevent a potential pogrom. Thus the governor of Grodno did not approve of some of the measures the police chief of Belostok suggested as the start of the fair approached in June 1882. The governor opposed closing down the taverns during the fair, stationing soldiers in the town, and so on.<sup>154</sup> Of course, the governor might be blamed for not paying sufficient attention to rising tensions

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152 Report from the governor of Grodno to the governor general of Vil'na, May 20, 1882, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1882 m., b. 77, l. 1–2.

153 *Vilenskii vestnik* 123 (1881).

154 Secret report from the governor of Grodno to the governor general of Vil'na, June 11, 1882, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 52, l. 165–167.

between Jews and Gentiles in the town. However, it is harder to counter the governor's arguments that closing the taverns would create popular discontent and that stationing soldiers might provoke unwelcome talk, especially as a little later the governor rejected the local police officer's assessment that the situation in the small town of Malech' (Pruzany District) was calm and ordered one squadron of an Ulan regiment to be sent there.<sup>155</sup> There is another case from Suvalki Province, where various sources assessed the situation on the ground differently. On June 14, 1882, the governor general of Warsaw called on the governor general of Vil'na, as head of Vil'na Military District, to leave the division stationed in Suvalki Province in place rather than send it off on summer exercises, but Tottleben decided that four reserves corps and one Cossack regiment would be sufficient and that the governor of Suvalki could dispose of these as he saw fit. As we have seen, on August 3 a pogrom broke out in Prienai, and there was no military presence in the area. After this incident, Tottleben reminded critics that the governor of Suvalki had been granted the right to station remaining army units in the province at his own discretion. In this way he attempted, at least indirectly, to place responsibility for the pogrom on the local governor. However, some of the governor general's arguments are questionable. For example, he asserted that it would not have been difficult to summon troops stationed outside Kovno to Prienai (a distance of some thirty versts, or thirty-two kilometers).<sup>156</sup> Given that there was no telegraph office in Prienai, it is unlikely that after the pogrom began, the army would have had time to march to the town and quell the disturbances.

Sometimes Jews would report local police officers for not making enough effort to halt anti-Jewish outbursts. Although official investigations did not confirm these complaints, it should not be forgotten that many officials did not disguise their own Judeophobic opinions. On the other hand, even local officials themselves admitted that sometimes justices of the peace would give anti-Jewish rioters light sen-

155 Report from the governor of Grodno to the governor general of Vil'na, July 11, 1882, *ibid.*, I. 190–191.

156 File "Po otzyvu Varshavskogo General-Gubernatora, otnositel'no komandirovaniia voisk v Suvalkskuiu guberniiu dlia preduprezhdeniia antievreiskikh bezporiadkov," *LVI*A, f. 378, ps, 1882 m., b. 124.

tences, and this gave rise to the idea that such incidents were not punishable, thereby encouraging more such behavior.<sup>157</sup>

The authorities' actions in the aftermath of the Prienai pogrom are worth noting. Having begun an inquiry into the reasons for the violence, officials attempted to excuse themselves on the grounds that preventing the incident would have been difficult because Prienai was far from the major centers, lacked telegraph communications, and had only three policemen, while several thousand people gathered there during holy days. They soon found a scapegoat, namely the head of Mariampol' District, Shablovskii, who had proved incapable of preventing the violence. He was forced to hand in his resignation. This may illustrate official respect for principle, but it was also a search for a scapegoat. It is hardly likely that Shablovskii could have halted the violence even if he had been in Prienai at the time.

Even though twenty-two of the forty-eight peasants who took part in the pogrom were convicted (and later given amnesty), anti-Jewish sentiment among the peasantry did not decrease.<sup>158</sup> Rumors spread that the authorities permitted the beating of Jews but not the theft of their property.

Thus these measures that the authorities took to prevent mass anti-Jewish violence were varied and usually effective. The governor general and governors attempted to pass on to their subordinates the instructions they had received from St. Petersburg, and sometimes these even referred to the experience of the authorities in the southern provinces. However, local officials in the Northwestern Region did nothing that their colleagues in the southern parts of the empire or the Kingdom of Poland would not have done.<sup>159</sup> Thus the actions of

157 Secret report from the governor of Mogilev to the minister of interior, May 5, 1882, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, 1882, d. 513, l. 44–46. Clear signals came from St. Petersburg that pogrom cases were to be tried as soon as possible. This was instructed in an *ukaz* of April 16, 1882: Note drafted in the Ministry of Justice, February 3, 1883, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 82, d. 9007, l. 20.

158 Report of the chief of the Mariampol' and Vladislavov District Gendarmerie to the governor of Suvalki, May 13, 1884, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, 1882, d. 280, ch. 11, l. 88–89. *Ha-melits* also reported on the trial: *Ha-melits* 22 (1884): 384. Newspapers reported that twenty-one persons were convicted, while nine were found not guilty: "Peterburgskaia letopis'," *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 17 (1884): 465–467.

159 Weeks, "Pasakojimas," 25–50; Klier, *Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms*, 54, 97.

Totleben and his subordinates were an important factor in the prevention of pogroms in this area, but they were not the only reason or even the main reason.

#### JEWISH REACTION

Lithuania—more specifically, the famous Kovno rabbi, Yitzhak Elhanan Spektor—was an important channel through which the Western European public was informed about the pogroms.<sup>160</sup> Here we shall discuss the direct reaction of Lithuanian Jewish communities to the news of pogroms in the southern parts of the empire and real or alleged rumors and threats locally.

Jewish appeals to the authorities and manifold reports in the Jewish press indicate that Lithuanian Jewish community leaders were almost panic-stricken for their lives and property. The direct local Jewish reaction to an apparent or real threat of pogroms was varied. There were attempts not to give Christians any pretext for violence; Jews attempted to defend themselves against possible attack, and the most common way to do this was to appeal to the authorities to protect them from violence.

The Jewish press contained reports from various parts of Lithuania, saying that as pogroms broke out in other parts of the empire, local Jews should try to appear less often in public, "walk on tiptoe," give way to Christians, and even abandon certain religious practices so as not to create pretexts for assault.<sup>161</sup>

Another part of the community was prepared to defend itself. According to local newspaper correspondents, the Jewish quarter in Vil'na resembled a fortress after the Warsaw pogrom: "each house is turned into a fortress; each shop is a fort; every locksmith, blacksmith, and carpenter is an engineer; and every Jewish citizen has become a commander-in-chief, his wife a commissary, his older children soldiers. After hearing that sulphuric acid was used in Warsaw in defense of shops, people are stockpiling it, and certain people are in charge of

160 Oppenheim, "The Kovno Circle," 91–126.

161 Ia. Katsenel'son, "Iz Vil'ny," *Russkii evrei* 42 (1881): 1659; I. Maizel', "Iz Vil'ny," *ibid.*, 2 (1882): 57; "Korrespondentsiia," *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 7 (1882): 157.



similar munitions.”<sup>162</sup> In Vil’na itself a little earlier, Jewish butchers helped firemen and policemen restrain conscripts who were beginning to cause disturbances.<sup>163</sup>

Sometimes local Jewish communities appealed for assistance to people with authority in the Christian community. This was the case in Rietavas in 1881 when Jews, fearing a pogrom during fair time, asked the owner of the town, Bohdan Ogiński, whether the Cossacks should be summoned. However, Ogiński promised to keep an eye on his men and not allow a pogrom to erupt.<sup>164</sup>

Even so, Jewish communities or their representatives would usually appeal immediately to the authorities. In certain cases they probably used a method that had often helped Jews before in their dealings with officialdom—bribery<sup>165</sup>—although the available sources concerning the incidents of the early 1880s do not confirm this. Local authorities were inundated with Jewish appeals to protect them from the threat of violence or arson. Their main plea was to employ the army to protect Jewish lives and property.

Investigations by certain officials showed that Jewish communities reacted very sensitively to the slightest incident. For instance, the Jewish community of Žiezmariai feared a pogrom would erupt there and made a written appeal for official protection. They blamed the whipping up of anti-Jewish sentiment entirely on the local Catholic priest. When the authorities began investigating this case, the Jews said that they knew nothing of accusations against the priest and that the text had been written in Vil’na by a certain Terek.<sup>166</sup> The question as to whether local Jewish representatives feared a backlash for making groundless accusations or whether, indeed, the author of the text had

162 “Vil’no, 25 dekabria 1881 g. (Iz chastnogo pis’ma),” *Nedel’naia khronika Voskhoda* 1 (1882): 13–14. Vil’na Jews’ attempts to defend themselves from possible attack are also mentioned in later news articles: *Rassvet* 19 (1882): 716.

163 I. Mazelevskii, “Iz Vil’ny,” 1816.

164 *Ha-melits* 25 (1881): 535. Prince Bohdan Michał Ogiński had quite ambivalent relations with Jews. He was in continuous conflict with them over renting plots and the right to build on them. Yet, he was also ready to defend them during tense times in the early 1880s, and in 1894 he helped many of the Jewish victims of the great fire in nearby Plungė: Cohen-Mushlin et al., *Synagogues*, 80–81.

165 Zborowski and Herzog, *Life Is with People*, 232, 235.

166 Official letter from the chancellery of the governor general of Vil’na to the prosecutor of Vil’na Province, June 30, 1881, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 74, l. 8–9.

made it all up is an important one, even though we are not likely to find an answer. It is important to note that in some appeals, the danger facing Jews was obviously exaggerated.

Furthermore, politically some of these appeals used a very intelligent tactic. They stressed that not only Jewish lives and property were in danger but also the imperial political regime and social stability. These appeals claimed that peasants not only threatened Jews but also drank to the health of the rebels of 1863–1864 and did not intend to obey the authorities because apparently the tsar allowed them to beat up Jews. They also claimed that the "revolutionary movement" sought to redistribute property so that "all would be equal."<sup>167</sup>

After the pogroms, local Jewish communities had other concerns. They realized that the impunity of the mob or their light punishment would increase the likelihood of future pogroms, so they followed the investigations and trials closely. They also made efforts to care for the Jewish victims. In Prienai, where there were no wealthy Jews (*gvir*) but only middle-class ones (*balebatim*), a committee was established to assist those who had suffered during the August 3 pogrom. This, according to *Ha-melits*, received support from various institutions and individual wealthy Jews in Kovno, Dinaburg (after 1893, Dvinsk; Daugavpils), Memel (Klaipėda), and Moscow.<sup>168</sup>

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Thus in the early 1880s in Lithuania, some Christians' increased anti-pathology towards the Jews developed into pogroms on at least two occa-

167 Appeal of I. Berkhovich to the governor general, May 6, 1881, Jewish appeal to the governor general (received May 8, 1881), appeal of the (Jewish) Townsfolk of Butrimonys to the governor general (received May 8, 1881), *ibid.*, I. 30–31, 41–42, 45.

168 *Ha-melits* 38 (1882): 767; 42 (1882): 846–847; *nabliudatel'* [?], "Preny (Suvalk. gub.) 15-go oktiabria," *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 43 (1882): 1154–1155. A few episodes from this fundraising campaign are worth noting separately. The committee had difficulty raising funds, and the largest donation (of 300 rubles) came from Baron David Gintsburg. At the beginning of November, a total of 1,200 rubles had been raised. At the same time, Jews paid their barrister 800 rubles for representation in court. Another case is connected with fundraising in the largest town closest to Prienai, Kovno, where the governor general permitted a joint Jewish and Christian group to collect offerings. According to the *Ha-melits* correspondent, the Christians had long been ready to collect funds, while Kovno Jews could find no time for doing so.

sions, at Balbieriškis and Prienai. Although the economic crisis that had just struck the country may have contributed to this deterioration in interethnic relations, it cannot have been a very important factor. The economic situation in 1880–1881 was much better than it had been in 1867–1868, when Lithuania had a poor harvest and was subsequently struck by famine.<sup>169</sup> There were no pogroms at that time. The main cause of increasing anti-Jewish sentiment lay beyond Lithuania's boundaries. Mass anti-Jewish violence in the southern provinces of the empire was the main factor that created a "pogrom atmosphere" in Lithuania; that is, it increased interethnic tensions, expressed primarily by some Christians' desire to "teach the Jews a lesson." For some the assassination of the tsar may have created the illusion of a political vacuum. The official local newspaper *Vilenskii vestnik* also whipped up anti-Jewish sentiment further. In certain cases inadequate action by the authorities may have contributed to interethnic tensions. This is what happened in Suvalki Province, where one of the causes of the Prienai pogrom was the authorities' failure to punish promptly those who had taken part in the Balbieriškis pogrom the year before.

At the same time, it is clear that even if there were no organized structures seeking to provoke pogroms, individuals or groups sought to spark anti-Jewish violence, because in various parts of Lithuania, flyers appeared that were designed to mobilize Judeophobes and terrorize Jews. Additionally, on several occasions, police reports mention people spreading rumors of future pogroms or making direct threats against Jews.

It is hard to "decipher" the few pogroms that happened in the early 1880s, because the statements of pogrom participants, victims, and witnesses are not available. The available information shows that the violence was directed against Jewish people and property. The destruction of Jewish property leads us to assume that the mob's motivation was socioeconomic—that is, revenge on Jews for their supposedly unfair business practices.<sup>170</sup> Physical violence against people, which sometimes happened in the southern parts of the empire and occasionally in Lithuania, was not murderous in nature. That is, there was

169 The years 1867–1868 were the last years in which the inhabitants of Kovno and Suvalki Provinces were short of food: Medišauskienė, "Laikas-erdvė-žmogus," 158.

no aim to kill the Jews but just, more likely, to "put them in their place." There were not many affected, and injuries were usually light.

Local officials tried to prevent interethnic tension from developing into a full-fledged pogrom, but they did nothing their southern colleagues did not do. Granted, we should not overestimate the efforts of local officials. Certain cases even show that Governor General Tottleben of Vil'na was not very shrewd, because in summer 1882 he stationed fewer army units in Suvalki Province than the governor general of Warsaw had advised. Even if some of the officials were typical Judeophobes, their "bureaucratic police mentality" would not permit them to encourage any mass movement that might be difficult to control, especially since, in the wake of the tsar's assassination, the imperial authorities were afraid of any kind of manifestation of popular discontent, be it social or political. In other words, officials had reason to fear that anti-Jewish movements could turn into a movement against landowners or even the imperial authorities.

170 In the early 1880s the Jewish press began to print articles on attempts by Christians, primarily landowners, to push Jews out of the retail trade: "Korrespondentsiia," *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 3 (1883): 60; "Korrespondentsiia" *ibid.*, 9 (1883): 218; Z. G-ch. [?], "Ianovo, Kovenskoi gub.," *Russkii evrei* 17 (1884): 9–13.



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### How Insulted Religious Feelings Turned into Pogroms: Lithuania in 1900

This chapter will concentrate on a single wave of anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania that spread through the Ponevezh (Panevėžys) and Shavli Districts of northern Lithuania (Kovno Province) during the first half of summer 1900.<sup>1</sup> Historians count up to twenty such incidents, but most of them were not mass events, and only a few of them fit the definition of “pogrom.”<sup>2</sup> The events of 1900 are a useful subject for research, since many sources related to them have survived (the evidence of many witnesses, official reports, and newspaper articles). With the help of comprehensive description techniques, these sources make it possible to examine this case of collective violence in detail. Here we shall attempt to explain the reasons behind the pogroms and the mechanisms that turned hatred towards the Jews into collective violence, the forms such violence took, the composition of the mobs, Jewish behavior when faced with such violence, and the reaction of the authorities.

#### EVENTS

The first of the pogroms took place in Konstantinovo on Sunday, June 4, 1900, during the Feast of Corpus Christi.<sup>3</sup> Anti-Jewish violence began at around 10 a.m., when a few peasants attacked Jews selling buns and hats in the square next to the church and tossed their wares around. At the same time, stones were hurled at the Jews. Attempts by a local policeman, Krishtiiān Tabak, to calm the mob failed. Although the peasants quieted down for a while, a large mob began to form quickly after the service ended. This forced the policeman to take refuge as

1 A short description of these events was presented by Žaltauskaitė, “Smurtas prieš žydus,” 79–98.

2 See the Introduction.

3 Now Vaškai, a toponym also used at the time. In 1880 the small town was split roughly equally between Catholics and Jews: Žaltauskaitė, “Smurtas prieš žydus,” 81.

people began to raid other shops, not only destroying goods but also engaging in theft. Moreover, not only were shops damaged by sticks and stones but private homes and places of worship were also attacked. Several Jews suffered minor bodily harm, according to later medical reports. The pogrom continued until 4 p.m. Damage was estimated at around 2,000 rubles.<sup>4</sup>

Exactly two weeks later, on Sunday, June 18, a pogrom took place in the nearby small town of Linkuva.<sup>5</sup> After church services, according to witnesses, around noon or 1 p.m., a mob of about 100 people first attacked Jews trading in the marketplace, beating them and strewing around their goods, which this time they did not even try to steal. Afterwards they went on a rampage along the street leading towards the church, smashing the windows of Jewish houses on the way and beating up any Jews they met. Several Jews suffered minor bodily harm, while thirteen or fourteen houses were damaged.<sup>6</sup>

Only one week later, on June 25, the next pogrom took place in the small town of Pašvitinys, near Linkuva. At first glance, the course of events here was very similar to the excesses in the previous two places. According to witnesses, that Sunday an unusually large number of peasants gathered in town, and some of them did not even attend church but stood in groups in the town square. Around noon or 1 p.m., probably after Mass ended, several peasants attacked an elderly Jew named Movsha Makhat, but he managed to escape. Then a mob of between 500 and 1,000 attacked Jewish houses around the square with sticks and stones. Later, pushed back by police, they did the same

4 Charges, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 2, b. 695, l. 11–12; File “Ob antievreiskikh bezporiadkakh v m. Konstantinovke,” *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 102, d. 5167; copy of a report by the Kovno District prosecutor, July 1, 1900, sent to the prosecutor, Vil’na Palace of Justice, *YIVO*, Elias Tcherikover Archives, file no. 963, p. 74389; “Sudebnaia khronika. Dela ob antievreiskikh bezporiadkakh v Ponevezhskom i Shavel’skom uезде Kovenskoï gubernii, v osobom prisutstvii Vilenskoi sudebnoi palaty s uchastiem soslovnykh predstavitelei, v g. Ponevezhe (ot nashego korespondenta),” *Voskhod* 1 (1902): 20–21.

5 At the end of the nineteenth century, Jews made up approximately 60 percent of the local population: Miškinis, *Linkuva*, 39.

6 Copy of a report by the Kovno District prosecutor, July 1, 1900, sent to the prosecutor, Vil’na Palace of Justice, *YIVO*, Elias Tcherikover Archives, file No 963, p. 74389; “Sudebnaia khronika,” 1 (1902): 22; File “Po obvineniiu krest’ianina Ignatii Sutkasa i drugikh v chisle 21 chel. v organizatsii evreiskogo pogroma v mestechke Linkove Ponevezhskogo uезда,” *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839.

along the mainly Jewish Linkuva Street and then returned towards the square to damage the remaining Jewish houses (a total of fifty-three properties were affected). Several Jews were beaten along the way; they were later diagnosed with minor injuries. The Jewish apothecary's and synagogue were damaged, too. Religious books were torn to pieces in the synagogue, which suffered damages of 326 rubles and seventy-five kopecks. The pogrom ended at around 4 p.m.<sup>7</sup>

Tensions escalated before the following Sunday, for June 29 was the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, when crowds of peasants gathered once again in small towns. However, the local authorities had learned their lesson from previous incidents and employed cautionary measures; the governor of Kovno himself, with 100 Cossacks, visited Žagarė, where around 15,000 Catholic peasants gathered on June 29; fifty Cossacks were deployed in Žeimelis. There were no large-scale outbursts in Žagarė,<sup>8</sup> where one peasant threatened the Jews that they would get their comeuppance after the governor and his Cossacks departed. In Žeimelis a pogrom began to develop after Mass at around 2 p.m.: a fairly large crowd gathered on the market square. The crowd beat two Jewish peddlers and began throwing stones at surrounding Jewish houses until the Cossacks and the police intervened.<sup>9</sup> Still, seven peasants went to the village of Žičiūnai four versts (approximately four kilometers) away, where they ransacked the house of a local Jew.<sup>10</sup>

7 Report from the prosecutor, Vil'na Palace of Justice, June 12, to the minister of justice, copy of a report by the Kovno District prosecutor, July 1, 1900, sent to the prosecutor, Vil'na Palace of Justice, *YIVO*, Elias Tcherikover Archives, file no. 963, p. 74390; files "Po obvineniiu krest'ian Kukevicha K., Ivashova P., Eidukasa O. i dr. za uchastie v bezporiadekakh v mest. Poshvity Shavel'skogo uezda i izbienii evreev," *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71; "O krest. Liudvige Sidzikevich, Aleksandre Korsak, obv. v uchastii v evreiskom pogrome," *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 3181; "O krest'ianakh Vikentii Gedraitis, Iuliane Pacevich, obv. v uchastii v evreiskikh pogromakh v mest. Poshvityni, Shavel'skogo uezda," *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843; "Sudebnaia khronika," 4 (1902): 21.

8 Here Jews made up approximately three-quarters of the local population of 8,000: Belozorchik, *Mestechko Zhagory*, 6, 13.

9 In Žeimelis approximately half the local population was Jewish: Žaltauskaitė, "Smurtas prieš žydus," 81.

10 File "Obv. Krest'ian Iurii Kazimirovicha Kutase (on zhe Kutevich), Kazimira Aleksandrovicha Kazakevicha i drugikh v uchastie v pogrome evreiskikh domov i soprotivlenii okazannom politseiskim vlastiam," *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 461; inquiry minutes, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 89; report from Kovno governor, July 5, 1900, to Vil'na governor general, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 4–5;



A bloody incident unfolded in a different manner in the village of Pamūšis (Linkuva Small Rural District) on June 30.<sup>11</sup> The first incident here took place in the evening after the Linkuva pogrom (June 18), when, without any reason, three peasants beat a Jewish man named Abraham Meer.<sup>12</sup> Before midnight on June 30, a group of youths (twelve to fifteen of them, according to most witness statements) from the nearby village of Šikšniai smashed the windows of a Jew's house and also damaged the shutters of a prayer house. They beat several Jews whom they came across, one of whom, Gutel Gruber, died of his wounds a few days later.<sup>13</sup>

A new source of tension developed in Konstantinovo on July 2 when, according to rumor, peasants intended to demolish a Jew's house next to the church and erect a cross on the site. A large peasant crowd gathered in town that day.<sup>14</sup> Minor attacks on Jews had begun as church services continued, and these would most likely have developed into a new pogrom later had local police and Cossacks not dispersed the crowd. The total damage done to Jewish property was around two rubles (for windows smashed at four houses).<sup>15</sup>

Thus in June and early July 1900, three pogroms took place in Ponevezh and Shavli Districts (Konstantinovo on June 4, Linkuva on June 18, Pašvytinys on June 25), two incipient pogroms were quelled

report by the Kovno District prosecutor, July 1, 1900, sent to the prosecutor, Vil'na Palace of Justice, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 102, d. 5167, l. 6; "Sudebnaia khronika," 4 (1902): 22; P. A.-s. [Povilas Višinskis (?)], "Dėlei muštynių su žydais [On Fights with Jews]," *Ūkininkas* 4 (1901): 28.

11 Sources also refer to this village as Pateflishki.

12 Abraham Meer examination minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349, l. 167.

13 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, July 8, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 9; files "Po obv. krest'ian: Petra Shukshto (on zhe Tunis), Vikentiiia Narvoisha i drugikh, v uchastie v evreiskom pogrome v der. Pomushi, Linkovskoi volosti, Ponevezhskogo uezda," *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 460; "O kr-ne Vikentii Petrove Narvoishe obv. po 1 ch. 269, 1489 i 1490 st. ul. o nak.) v uchastii v evreiskikh pogromakh v derevne Pomushi, Linkovskoi volosti, Ponevezhskago uezda," *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349; "Sudebnaia khronika. Delo ob antievreiskikh bezporiadkakh v der. Pomushe (Kov. gub.)," *Voskhod* 16 (1902): 23–25; "Sudebnaia khronika. (Anti-evreiskie bezporiadki)," *Budushchnost'* 15 (1902): 295–296.

14 Some witnesses said 4,000, others as many as 6,000–7,000: inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 838, l. 12, 75.

15 Report by the Ponevezh local police officer to the governor of Kovno, July 4, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 10.

by the police and Cossacks (Žeimelis on June 29, Konstantinovo on July 2), and there was one small outbreak of anti-Jewish violence, which most likely would not have developed into a full-fledged pogrom, even though blood was spilled (one Jew died from his wounds at Pamūšis on June 30). All other acts of violence in northern Lithuania in early summer 1900, when Jews were beaten solely for being Jewish,<sup>16</sup> were smaller. In this respect they did not differ from conflicts that presumably happened quite often even during “peaceful” years and which local authorities often did not even report. The 1900 pogroms, by contrast, increased official attention towards such conflicts and so appeared more often in the records. This brief account of events is just an introduction to a detailed analysis of the wave of anti-Jewish attacks in northern Lithuania, which shall begin with an attempt to explain why these pogroms took place.

#### REASONS

When discussing the reasons for anti-Jewish violence in northern Lithuania in 1900, as mentioned in this book’s introduction, it is worth following sociological studies to distinguish between certain structural changes that may have contributed to outbreaks of ethnic violence and specific circumstances connected directly with the pogroms.

First of all, there was no particular political crisis in 1900 as there was in 1881 or 1905, when most pogroms took place in the Russian Empire. Thus the real power of the authorities was not diminished, and there were no preconditions for people to form illusions about the weakness of central or local authorities. The period before 1900 was not marked by any liberal “thaw” that might have changed the status of Jews, and so other social groups ought not to have had grounds for fearing that Jews would obtain extra powers or that the existing balance of power would change.

While the demand for grain on world markets forced the Russian authorities to introduce differentiated tariffs that were disadvanta-

16 Report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, July 13, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 11–12; report by the Kovno District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil’na Palace of Justice, July 31, 1900, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 102, d. 5167, l. 17; “Teriojimas žydų [Terrorizing Jews],” *Tėvynės sargas* 8 (1900): 45; Berželis [?], “Muštynės su žydais [Fights with Jews],” *Ūkininkas* 10 (1900): 145.

geous to Lithuanian peasants and led to a collapse in grain prices, there was no special economic crisis at that time.

Slightly later, in mid-July, the governor of Kovno attempted to connect these events to “secret agitation” and “the application of revolutionary proclamations.”<sup>17</sup> We shall return a little later to the issue of to what extent the pogroms were spontaneous and to what extent they were organized and planned. Here let us just consider the question of whether this wave of ethnic violence could be connected with the consolidation of Lithuanian nationalism.<sup>18</sup> Ponevezh and Shavli Districts, as shown by the number of intercepted smugglers, distributors, and possessors of underground Lithuanian publications, were important centers of Lithuanian national movement.<sup>19</sup> Even so, this region was not as important in the network for smuggling underground publications as the border districts of Rossieny or Tel’shi, and overall it could not rival the influence on the spread of Lithuanian nationalism that was enjoyed by Suvalki Province (Kingdom of Poland). For this reason alone, Lithuanian nationalism cannot be regarded as the most important factor in the outbreak of ethnic violence in Ponevezh and Shavli Districts. In other words, if Lithuanian nationalism had been the driving force, pogroms ought to have taken place where this nationalism was strongest. An additional argument indicating doubts over whether strengthened national consolidation influenced the violence under discussion here involves events of the 1905 Revolution. In these areas, as in many other ethnic Lithuanian regions, Russian officials and teachers were driven out en masse, and demands were made to oust the Russian authorities and grant Lithuania autonomy. Threats of violence were heard on many occasions, but the available evidence suggests that threats against Jews were issued only once. In many cases the targets of such threats were Russians.<sup>20</sup> According to the Jewish, press, the

17 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, July 13, 1900, *LVI*A, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 11.

18 Sociologists point to an increased level of identification with the in-group (in other words, ethnocentrism) as one precondition for ethnic violence: Bergmann, “Exclusionary Riots,” 183.

19 Merkys, *Knygnešių laikai*, 202, 210–212.

20 Files “Doznanie po obvineniiu Kazimira Narushevicha po 129 st. Ugol. ulozh, za rasprostranenie protivopravitel’svennykh proklamatsii i za prizyv k vooruzhennomu soprotivleniiu,” *LVI*A, f. 1227, ap. 1, b. 185; “Doznanie po obvineniiu Vladislava Sorochinskago po 129 st. Ugol. ulozh., za poiznoshenie rechi

Russians were driven out of Linkuva and officials attempted to provoke the peasants into organizing a pogrom, but the Lithuanians, influenced by “Lithuanian revolutionary parties,” did not give in to such agitation.<sup>21</sup> In other words, Jews were not at the top of the “hierarchy of enemies” of nationally aware Lithuanians active in these areas. Thus it is unlikely that the influence of Lithuanian nationalism could be a general reason for the phenomenon. Although the Catholic Lithuanian press continued to propagate a whole spectrum of antisemitic stereotypes (about a world Jewish plot, harm done to Christians, Jews morally corrupting Gentiles, the slovenliness of Jews, and so on), anti-semitic agitation declined in the liberal press.<sup>22</sup> There is evidence of certain real or potential ethnic tensions in these areas in earlier years (peasants complained about a Jewish estate manager exploiting them; this same Jewish manager was later accused, during a conflict with the estate owner, of blasphemy against Christ<sup>23</sup>). However, there is no available evidence to suggest that opposition to Jews in the Ponevezh and Shavli regions was greater than in other areas of Lithuania.

It is hard to find any more general political, socioeconomic, or ideological changes to explain an intensification in anti-Jewish sentiment in 1900 in particular. Thus, what must be sought here are immediate triggers for violence that took place in northern Lithuania in summer 1900. Various sources, primarily official reports, most often present three events that apparently inspired the pogroms in Ponevezh and Shavli Districts: the apparent kidnapping of a girl and alleged Jewish intentions of her ritual murder before Easter 1900, the “Jewish Procession” at Konstantinovo on May 30, and the conflict in Konstantinovo between the priest’s workmen and some Jews. We shall examine in greater detail these cases and a few other, less frequently mentioned, incidents that led to violence.

natsionalisticheskogo kharaktera,” *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 1, b. 187; “Doznanie po obvineniiu Aleksandra Kadisa po 129 st. Ugol. ulozh., za proiznoshenie natsionalisticheskoi rechi,” *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 1, b. 208; secret report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, November 18, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 74, l. 22–23.

21 “Za nedeliu,” *Voskhod* 51–52 (1905): 32.

22 See Chapter Two.

23 Files: *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1820 m., b. 132; “Po otnosheniiu Ministra Vnutrennikh del v sledstvie doneseniiia shliakhticha Kharevicha o bogokhul’stve Evreia Abrama Vil’komirskago,” *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1828 m., b. 697.

Ona Zajarskaitė was a maidservant on her godfather's farm in the village of Velžai near Konstantinovo. Before Catholic Easter celebrations on March 8, 1900, she went missing for a while. She later claimed that several Jews had kidnapped her and imprisoned her in a cellar in Konstantinovo. However, in the evening she apparently managed to escape. After investigations into the case began, the girl changed her story several times.<sup>24</sup> It is likely that the girl skipped work that day and decided that her most credible and justified alibi would be to allege that she was kidnapped by Jews. If this hypothesis is correct, the tale of Jews stealing children or adolescents before Easter to kill later and use their blood for ritual purposes was familiar not only to Zajarskaitė but also to the wider community. According to local officials investigating the reasons for these pogroms, tales of Jews stealing Christian children for religious purposes were something babies imbibed along with their mothers' milk, and naughty children were routinely warned that they "would end up in Jewish matzot."<sup>25</sup> Even if we were to suspect local Russian policemen of bias (though to do so in this precise case would be difficult), we could find more evidence of the superstition of ritual murder, which was widespread not just in these districts but across Lithuania.<sup>26</sup> A similar charge was made against Jews in 1924, and that event even became the subject of a memoir-like book whose author came from this small town.<sup>27</sup> Blood libel was not only transmitted orally but also supported by educated Catholic public figures. During the wave of pogroms discussed here, the underground newspaper *Tevynės sargas* reported such a tale thus:

It is not enough for Jews to cheat Christians, mock them, and take care to harm them in all manner of ways; even their Talmud learning requires them to use Christian blood for their feasts. Not long ago, foreign newspapers report, this happened in Austria: one nineteen-year-old girl lived with her mother in a village and walked every day to a nearby town to learn how to sew.

24 Investigation report by police officer Tabak, KAA, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 254; report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, June 26, 1900, LVIA, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 3.

25 Inquiry minutes, LVIA, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349, l. 248; the same document, LVIA, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 460a, l. 53; "Sudebnaia khronika," 1 (1902): 23.

26 See Chapter One.

27 Goldblatt, *It Was But Yesterday*.

Her route led through a wood, and one day Jews grabbed the Christian maiden, took her into the wood and killed her, taking her blood with them. The town butcher discovered the murder; the girl used to come to his house to learn sewing; soon the authorities caught the Jewish killer, tried him and hanged him. In the old days there used to be stories of similar events in Lithuania, but nowadays our Jews avoid the authorities and are more careful about such things.<sup>28</sup>

Describing this incident from the town of Polná, *Tėvynės sargas* not only did not question such accusations against Jews but also added that there were such examples in Lithuania, although asserting that Jews had since become more cautious.<sup>29</sup> A similar story appeared in Vil'na in 1900, when Blondes was accused of seeking to murder his Christian maid. Although ethnic tension obviously increased after this and officials reported increased attacks on Jews, there were no pogroms.<sup>30</sup> Press information about the Vil'na case reached Ponevezh and Shavli Districts.<sup>31</sup> Soon rumors spread in these districts too that Jews had kidnapped a Christian girl for ritual purposes.<sup>32</sup>

28 "Žydai. Pieszinys [Jews. Image]," *Tėvynės sargas* 6–7 (1900): 52. This June–July issue of *Fatherland Guard*, printed in Germany and smuggled into Lithuania, could scarcely have been another incitement to ethnic violence. When it reached Lithuania is not clear.

29 In this case Leopold Hilsner was accused of murdering nineteen-year-old Anežka Hrušová and sentenced to death. He was later tried on two counts of murder and sentenced to death once more. Later the emperor commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. Hilsner was found innocent only in 1916. Kieval, "Representation and Knowledge," 52–72.

30 File "O nasilii nad evreiami za upotreblenie khristianskoi krovi pri izgotovlenii presnokov na prazdnik 'Peisakh,'" *LVIA*, f. 688, ap. 6, b. 99. See also Chapter One.

31 Report by the curate of Rozalimas, Kazimerz Kozlowski, to the bishop of Samogitia, October 1, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 174, l. 596–597; inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349, l. 248; "Vilenskaia zhizn'," *Severo-zapadnoe slovo* 464 (1900); "Vilenskaia zhizn'," *ibid.*, 466 (1900).

32 Report by the curate of Rozalimas, Kazimerz Kozlowski, to the bishop of Samogitia, October 1, 1900, report by parish priest of Konstantinovo B. Stacevich to the bishop of Samogitia, August 20, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 174, l. 596, 609; copy of a report by the Kovno District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil'na Palace of Justice, July 12, 1900, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 102, d. 5167, l. 11–12.

During Easter (April 9) there were no serious incidents at Konstantinovo, except for four panes of glass broken at one Jewish home.<sup>33</sup> A considerable amount of time had passed since the girl's alleged kidnapping, and no one was killed, no one disappeared, and anti-Jewish emotions did not escalate into violence. However, local Christians did not forget the incident.

Christians in the district interpreted another incident, occurring on May 30, as an attack on their religion. Several Jews from Konstantinovo were celebrating the end of Talmud studies and, fueled by food and alcohol, they decided to fool around by organizing a "procession." They placed a cap with the Hebrew inscription *Hevre gemore* (Talmud Study Association) on a pupil's head and led him by the arm, for he was already completely drunk.<sup>34</sup> Another Jew rode a horse. This "procession" sang songs as it passed through the town. This parade had no effect on peasants who saw it pass, but visiting Christian Gypsies thought the Jews were laughing at Christ's Passion and offending Christian sentiments deeply.<sup>35</sup> This version began to spread in the town and district.

Sources provide several more stories about incidents in this locality at the time whereby Jews allegedly offended Christian religious sensibilities (for example, in Pasvalys, Jews allegedly tore the figure of Christ from a crucifix), but police investigations did not confirm the spreading of such rumors.<sup>36</sup>

The last straw proved to be a conflict in Konstantinovo on June 3 between the priest's workmen, who used a gun to frighten people, and Jews, who, according to certain sources, liked to let their animals graze in the priest's meadows. These workmen felt wronged, mostly because the local police officer took away their gun with the help of the Jews.<sup>37</sup> Thus a thirst for revenge for a specific, personally endured offense

33 Inspection report, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349, l. 256.

34 None of the town Christians they met would have understood what the Hebrew inscription meant.

35 Report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, June 26, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 2; "Sudebnaia khronika," 1 (1902): 22–23.

36 Investigation reports by police officers K. Tabak and K. Gorchakov, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 255, 257; inspection report, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349, l. 257. *Ūkininkas* reports that "they say that again a Jewish child has been seen in Linkuva apparently dragging a statue of the Suffering Christ around the town on a rope": P. A-s. [Povilas Višinskis (?)], "Dėlei muštynių," 28.

37 Inquiry minutes of police officer K. Gorchakov, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 257.

developed alongside what local Christians saw as an insult to their religious sentiments and an attack on their collective feelings.

Nevertheless, even the numerous primary sources do not answer certain questions. Since the three incidents (the alleged abduction of a girl, the “Procession,” and the conflict between the Jews and the priest’s workmen) happened in Konstantinovo in 1900, it is not difficult to understand why the first pogrom took place in this town and new tension rose at the beginning of July. At the same time, this whole chain of events demonstrates that a considerable amount of imagined offense had to accumulate for a pogrom to develop; one event (Zajarskaitė’s tale of her alleged kidnap by Jews) did not suffice for collective violence to erupt. However, how do we explain that a week later on June 11, when large groups of peasants typically gathered in town, there was no pogrom in the area? And why was it that afterwards, they happened week after week? Why was it that pogroms erupted in Linkuva and Pašvitinys rather than in other nearby towns where, as seen earlier, anti-Jewish sentiment also increased and would have developed into pogroms had the authorities not intervened?<sup>38</sup> And why was there only one pogrom on June 18 and 25? Neither representatives of the imperial authorities nor the victims’ lawyers were able to find evidence of an organized Lithuanian nationalist plot, even though they voiced their suspicions that one existed.

#### PROGRESSION TOWARDS VIOLENCE

In this case all mentioned actions or alleged actions by some local Jews were interpreted in northern Lithuanian Catholic communities as an insult. We cannot completely rule out fear either—that is, fear that Jews would try to kidnap children—but it is not clear that this emotion was significant. Indignation became the most important emotion for a while and overtook other basic human needs, leading people to act. In turn, these emotions easily generated a desire for revenge.

Certain communication mechanisms were required so that emotions could spread more widely. At the turn of the nineteenth and

38 Especially since in same places the same persons attempted to provoke peasants against Jews at Joniškėlis on June 26: Minutes of a witness interrogation, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 70.



twentieth centuries, political activists, proclamations, and the press could theoretically fulfill this role in society. In the case of Ponevezh and Shavli Districts, rumor was the most important means of communication. As the peasant's counsel, one of the leaders of the Lithuanian national movement, Jonas Vileišis, said during the trial relating to the Pamūšis incident: "Intellectuals believe rumors too, so what can we say about simple ignorant folk—this is the sole source of their knowledge of external events."<sup>39</sup>

In this case the rumors that spread most effectively were of two kinds. The first, mentioned earlier, alleged that the Jews had done harm. Alongside these rumors that aroused anti-Jewish feeling, there were new ones that specifically drove people to take action.

The rumors spread in places where there had been no significant anti-Jewish incidents.<sup>40</sup> According to some sources, they began back in March,<sup>41</sup> claiming that the tsar and tsarina had issued a decree allowing the beating of Jews with impunity. Peasants liked to boast to Jews that they not only knew about the alleged decree but were also familiar with its contents.<sup>42</sup> As we shall see from other modifications of this rumor, the word "beat" in this case often meant "beat to death."

A more specific rumor began to spread in Konstantinovo, where the story began, claiming that the authorities would allow the beating of Jews (even to death), but that for each beaten or killed Jew, up to three kopecks, or exactly three kopecks, would have to be paid.<sup>43</sup> This rumor, which valued Jewish life at three kopecks, was encountered very often in Ponevezh and Shavli Districts in the summer of 1900, as late as

39 "Sudebnaia khronika. (Anti-evreiskie bezporiadki)," *Budushchnost'* 15 (1902): 296.

40 Decision of deputy prosecutor of the Vil'na Palace of Justice on the Vabalninkas town police official (*desiatnik*) Jonas Vaitiekūnas, March 5, 1902, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 515, l. 5–6; secret report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, July 13, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps. 1900 m., b. 24, l. 12 (Joniškis); copy of a report by the Kovno District prosecutor, July 1, 1900, sent to the prosecutor, Vil'na Palace of Justice, *YIVO*, Elias Tcherikover Archives, file No 963, p. 74390 (Pasvalys).

41 "Sudebnaia khronika," 3 (1902): 22.

42 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, July 13, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps. 1900 m., b. 24, l. 12; minutes of interrogation with victim, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 41.

43 Copy of a report by the Kovno District prosecutor, July 1, 1900, sent to the prosecutor, Vil'na Palace of Justice, *YIVO*, Elias Tcherikover Archives, file No 963, p. 74389.

September.<sup>44</sup> In fact, according to some rumors, the three-kopec price was said to apply only during the day, and there was no fee for killing Jews at night.<sup>45</sup> There were variations on the theme: two weeks in jail;<sup>46</sup> thirty kopecks;<sup>47</sup> three kopecks for a village Jew, five for a town Jew, and fifteen kopecks for a rabbi;<sup>48</sup> and so on. Another rumor said that for nailing a murdered Jew to a tree in St. Petersburg, one had to pay five rubles.<sup>49</sup> In Linkuva it was rumored that the owner of the town, General von Raden, was allowing each peasant to kill a dozen Jews.<sup>50</sup>

An “opposite” rumor functioned in parallel, namely that for killing a Jew not only would the perpetrator not be fined or imprisoned but that the government was even prepared to pay for such acts. Sometimes specific sums were mentioned—those same three kopecks or three *desiatins* of land.<sup>51</sup> In Linkuva, according to Jewish victims, Juozapas Pakalnis bragged not only that he possessed the relevant imperial document but also that a few weeks earlier he had murdered three Jews in Konstantinovo and received, according to various accounts, twenty or twenty-five rubles.<sup>52</sup>

A new kind of rumor seems to have appeared before the third pogrom at Pašvitinys (June 25), alleging that the authorities were permitting the beating of Jews for three weeks.<sup>53</sup> It had been more than

44 Verdict, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 847, l. 502; inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 838, l. 81.

45 Decision of deputy prosecutor of the Vil'na Palace of Justice on the Vabalninkas town police official (*desiatnik*) Jonas Vaitiekūnas, March 5, 1902, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 515, l. 5–6.

46 Inquiry minutes, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 201. The topos of two weeks in prison was repeated: inquiry minutes, *ibid.*, l. 115.

47 Interrogation of the Pašvitinys victim Movsha Makhat, *ibid.*, l. 34.

48 Inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 461, l. 30.

49 Inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 838, l. 83.

50 Inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 5.

51 Inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349, l. 257; inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 838, l. 81; “Sudebnaia khronika,” 4 (1902): 21.

52 Minutes of interrogations with the victim and a witness, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 63, 67; “Sudebnaia khronika,” 3 (1902): 21.

53 Copy of a report by the Kovno District prosecutor, July 1, 1900, sent to the prosecutor, Vil'na Palace of Justice, *YIVO*, Elias Tcherikover Archives, file No. 963, p. 74390 (here there is even a specific date when such a rumor began to spread—June 21); minutes of interrogation with police officer F. Karveit, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 614 (the same document: *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 64); inquiry minutes, *ibid.*, l. 2, 41.

two weeks since the first pogrom at Konstantinovo on June 4, so this rumor was necessary most likely so that no one would wonder if the tsar's "permission" for Jew-beating was still valid.

According to certain witness accounts, as time passed the rumors changed considerably. Thus before the second outbreak of violence in Konstantinovo, it was rumored that the Jews had captured a peasant, dressed him in a red cloak, and insulted him in imitation of the ridiculing of Jesus Christ.<sup>54</sup>

The content of these rumors and the dynamics of their spread reveal a considerable amount about growing ethnic tension and relations between the two ethno-confessional groups. Let us start by asking whether or to what extent the spread of these rumors was a spontaneous process.

Many contemporary witnesses were convinced, or at least tried to give the impression, that stories about missing children and the tsar's decree were not so much the result of uncontrolled spreading of information as an organized act. The governor of Kovno claimed that this was "secret agitation,"<sup>55</sup> while the Konstantinovo police officer blamed "malevolent persons."<sup>56</sup> Local officials favored blaming the growth of anti-Jewish sentiment in Ponevezh and Shavli Districts on underground proclamations being distributed in the area at the time.<sup>57</sup> However, it emerged in court that police officers had not even seen any such proclamations. Apart from a text called "*Žydų rauda*" (Jewish Lament) found at Žeimelis on June 29 that declared, according to officials, that "the end has come for Jews,"<sup>58</sup> a proclamation called "Lithuanian Men and Women" by the Lithuanian writer Jonas

54 Minutes of interrogation with Mikhail Pastukhov, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 838, l. 133.

55 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, July 13, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 11.

56 Report from local police officer, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 838, l. 3.

57 Report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, July 8 and 13, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 6–7, 11; copy of a report by the Kovno District prosecutor, July 12, 1900, sent to the prosecutor, Vil'na Palace of Justice, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 102, d. 5167, l. 11–12; "Sudebnaia khronika. (Anti-evreiskie bezporiadki)," *Budushchnost'* 15 (1902): 295–296.

58 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, July 13, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 13. Most likely what is referred here is the same song by Gimžauskas mentioned in Chapter One.

Biliūnas was more widespread in those areas.<sup>59</sup> It was directed against the imperial authorities and not only did not call for violence against Jews but listed Jewish workers among other long-suffering workers and thus in effect called for solidarity.<sup>60</sup> In court, victims' counsel also spoke of unspecified malevolent agitators who sought to instigate a pogrom.<sup>61</sup> The underground Lithuanian press, particularly the liberal-minded *Varpas*, blamed officials who apparently sought to blame the Lithuanian nationalist activists: "The authorities' servants spread tales that apparently there were proclamations to beat up Jews."<sup>62</sup> In fact, neither the authorities nor Lithuanian nationalist activists had any rational motive for promoting anti-Jewish violence. This version of events is discredited not only by official and nationalist logic but also by many sources. After questioning hundreds of victims, witnesses, and accused, examiners could find no evidence of Lithuanian nationalist agitation. There is, however, evidence of the opposite: one Lithuanian activist, Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė, recalls in her memoirs that she attempted to convince peasants that there was no such permission to bait and beat Jews.<sup>63</sup>

This, of course, does not mean that there were no locals unconnected with official institutions or Lithuanian nationalism who would have sought to incite a pogrom and so spread rumors or initiated anti-Jewish violence. Pakalnis in Linkuva was one such figure. If we are to accept from other cases that those who spread such rumors actually believed them in part, Pakalnis's story was pure fiction: in Konstantinovo no one died, and he certainly did not receive twenty or twenty-five rubles from the authorities. There were peasants who intimidated Jews by telling them that several dozen peasants had signed pledges to beat Jews.<sup>64</sup> It is obvious that there were local Catholics who de-

59 Kipšas [?], "Panevėžio pav. Pasvalis," *Ūkininkas* 9 (1900): 138; Berželis [?], "Muštynės su žydais," 145; Merkys, *Knygnešių laikai*, 319–320.

60 Granted, the epithets applied to the imperial authorities—"bloodsuckers" who "drink our blood," "the tsar is a leech that sucks our blood"—were very close to those that Lithuanian antisemites applied to Jews. Many copies of this proclamation are contained under this shelfmark: *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 2, b. 248.

61 "Sudebnaia khronika," 4 (1902): 21, 23.

62 R.R. [?], "Panevėžio pav.," *Varpas* 2 (1901): 20.

63 Petkevičaitė-Bitė, *Krislai*, 685. The writer was one who favored collaboration between Lithuanians and Jews, and so her evidence in this instance is reliable.

64 Inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 838, l. 82.

liberately attempted to spread rumors urging people to use violence against Jews. Thus following D. Horowitz, who claimed that “a rumor will not take hold unless there is a market for it,”<sup>65</sup> we may say that there was rich soil for these rumors to grow.

Furthermore, the existence of an organizational kernel should help to keep the contents of a rumor unchanged, or strengthen it (by increasing the reward for murdering Jews and so on). Meanwhile the rumors that spread through Ponevezh and Shavli Districts in summer 1900 often, although not always, mutated without any clear blueprint and sometimes even became completely illogical. For example, the tale of alternative punishments for murdering a Jew (two weeks in jail or a three-kopec fine) are not compatible. As has been noted, some claimed that a fine had to be paid for killing a Jew, while others offered a reward for such behavior. Generally speaking, it is likely that the rumors spread like a game of “telephone”: the figure three is repeated often, but the context changes (a fine of three or thirty kopecks for killing a Jew or a similar reward for murder; three *desiatins* of land; three weeks). This may or may not refer to the thirty pieces of silver Judas received for betraying Christ.

No less important are the contents of these rumors. One of the most important things they reveal is the place of Jews in the local peasant Catholics’ perception of ethnic hierarchy. The pricing of Jewish life at three kopecks shows that peasants imagined Jews to be on the lowest rung of the ethnic hierarchy ladder.<sup>66</sup>

Attention should be drawn to one more aspect of these rumors: the rumors alleged there was permission to beat (or kill) Jews but said nothing about ravaging Jewish property. A rumor spread among a Konstantinovo mob on July 2 that Cossacks would come and defend only Jewish property, but not Jewish life.<sup>67</sup> Thus the *message transmitted* by rumor should fit the *offense* that in this case had allegedly been inflicted on Catholic religious sentiment. It is credible that rumors

65 D. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 75.

66 The Lithuanian writer Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė, who witnessed these events, directly supposed, without remembering the exact content of the rumors, that the Jews had been “priced” most likely “at around between fifteen and thirty rubles”: Petkevičaitė-Bitė, *Krislai*, 685. It was difficult for the writer to imagine that Jews could be so undervalued that they were worth only three kopecks.

67 Report from the local police officer, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 838, l. 3.

about damaging Jewish property could appear when the alleged Jewish offense was connected with their economic activities or social status.

It is not so easy to explain why the authority chosen to justify such actions was the tsar and his officials. Such a question would scarcely arise if we were discussing the empire's Orthodox territories. In that case, indeed, one factor could have been peasant loyalty to the monarchy, or to put matters simply, the belief in a good peasant-loving tsar who allowed them, in this case, to settle accounts with supposed exploiter-Jews. It is unlikely that such beliefs would have taken deep root in ethnic Lithuanian villages. Rumors of a decree did indeed spread often on the eve of pogroms in Russia, and perhaps, in one way or another, they reached the area around Ponevezh and Shavli. On the other hand, appealing to the tsar's supreme authority was very convenient, as this would be the most logical source of permission to bait Jews. First of all, it was no secret that in the Russian Empire, Jews were one of the most discriminated-against ethno-confessional groups. The border between legal discrimination and the physical violence that the tsar allegedly encouraged could seem minimal to a simple peasant. Furthermore, the sanction apparently offered by the supreme imperial authorities was convenient, because it sent a terrifying message to the Jews that no one would protect them if the tsar himself condoned violence against them. This aspect is important because, before the pogroms, local peasants not only repeated rumors among themselves as a way to mobilize one another but also shared this "information" with Jews in order to intimidate them. Thus at Pamūšis, after pogroms began in northern Lithuania, Jews received threats of violence daily.<sup>68</sup>

In this context the rumor spreading through northern Lithuania in summer 1900 that there would be a reward for murdering a Jew (good work should not go unpaid) seems logical. It is more difficult to explain the rumors that there was a fine for Jew-killing. If the tsar permits the murder of Jews, why should the killer pay? Here several interpretations are possible. The first is connected with the possible ambiguity concerning the legality of such acts. It may be that peasants still had doubts about the legality of killing Jews, even as they heard rumors or spread them concerning the alleged *ukaz*. Determining whether peasants in this case really believed such rumors may well be impossible.

68 Minutes of interrogations with the victim and a witness, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349, l. 105, 111, 113, 114.

It may be that the versions about the three kopecks' fine developed because peasants understood the illegality of such acts. Such a hypothesis may be justified by the rumor that fines were to be paid only for Jews killed during daylight, while killing at night was allowed. The claim that this version was developed in peasant minds may be confirmed by the price list for murdering Jews—in villages, three kopecks; in towns, five kopecks; for a rabbi, fifteen kopecks; for a Jew from the capital, five rubles. According to the old Lithuanian statute, peasants, unlike members of any other class, were punished according to the social status of their victims. Another interpretation of this variable "price list" is that it was analogous to a hunting license. The fee for killing a wild animal depended on the perceived value of the beast; the more valuable the beast, the higher the price paid for the permission to kill it. The fact that the Linkuva rumor allowed for a dozen murders fits the norm enforced for hunting rights. A similar view of Jews as an object for sport is revealed not far from where these events took place, namely near Biržai at Easter 1902, when, according to the Hebrew newspaper *Ha-melits*, peasants made a Jewish straw effigy that they placed on a roof and used as a shooting target. They were unable to hit it, but their shooting set fire to the building, and later as many as fifteen houses were damaged by this fire.<sup>69</sup> This story of Jews symbolically being treated as hunting objects may be completely credible, given that there was a widespread belief in Central and Eastern Europe, including Lithuania, that Jews had no soul. Lithuanian peasants referred only to themselves as people; Jews were just Jews.<sup>70</sup>

Thus the rumors spread in early summer 1900 in Ponevezh and Shavli Districts were cruel. If we agree with Horowitz that "rumors of aggression are often a reliable predictor of the magnitude of the aggression to follow,"<sup>71</sup> we ought to expect bloody pogroms. However, the wave of ethnic violence in northern Lithuania does not support this hypothesis.

69 *Ha-melits* 105 (1902): 3.

70 "Look, they are not called 'people,' just 'Jew'; in the case of death you cannot say of a Jew that he 'died like a man' but that he 'croaked' or 'kicked the bucket': P. A.-s. [Povilas Višinskis (?)], "Dėlei muštinyų," 28; Belova, "Evreiskii mif," 263.

71 D. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 87.

MOB MEMBERS AND THE COURSE  
OF ETHNIC VIOLENCE

The general characteristics of those who took part in anti-Jewish violence in northern Lithuania in 1900, according to various sources, are very similar. The underground Lithuanian press calls them “farm lads” or “striplings,”<sup>72</sup> and officials refer to them as “youths” or “workers and shepherds” or in similar terms.<sup>73</sup> We cannot rely solely on these descriptions, of course, because those who described them this way did so according to their own agenda. In this case the interests of the underground press and the authorities coincided. They sought to downplay the scale of the events, and one of their tactics was to depict the attackers as a marginal sector of society that was in no way representative of society as a whole. Meanwhile, certain Jewish witnesses stressed that real farmers also took part in these incidents.<sup>74</sup> If we take these accounts as complementary, we obtain a more accurate picture.

As can be seen from the records from the questioning of the accused, the charge sheets, and other sources, most of those who took part in the anti-Jewish violence were young people from neighboring villages, economically dependent on others, unmarried, and illiterate males.<sup>75</sup> However, it should be noted that this social picture of participants differs a little from incident to incident. As many as half of the dozen defendants in Žeimelis were thirty years old or older.<sup>76</sup> Some

72 Š-ja [?], “Paneviežys ir Mintauja,” *Varpas* 12 (1900): 142; R.R. [?], “Panevėžio pav.,” *Varpas* 2 (1901): 20. The parish priest at Pašvitinys, Father Zhivotkovskii, gave a similar description in his report to the bishop of Samogitia: his letter dated August 23, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 174, l. 570.

73 Copy of the report from the prosecutor, Vil’na Palace of Justice to the minister of justice, June 12, 1900, *YIVO*, Elias Tcherikover Archives, file no. 963, p. 74389; secret report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, July 13, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps. 1900 m., b. 24, l. 12; *S. Peterburgskie vedomosti* 12 (1902); “Antievreiskie bezporiadki,” *Iuridicheskaja gazeta* 7 (1905).

74 Victim’s interrogation minutes, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 186.

75 During questioning the accused had to reveal their education. Most reported being illiterate, but “illiteracy” may have been defined in this instance as the inability to read and write Russian.

76 Accusation, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 461, l. 12. We chose thirty years of age as a dividing line because, according to research so far, the average age for Lithuanian peasant males at marriage between 1835 and 1915 was thirty to thirty-three years: Marcinkevičienė, *Vedusiųjų visuomenė*, 72.



of them took part in both incidents in the town.<sup>77</sup> Of thirteen offenders from Pamūšis, only two were more than thirty years old.<sup>78</sup> At Pašvitinys approximately two-thirds of the accused were less than thirty years old; they were unmarried, illiterate men who owned no property and earned their living either as hirelings or in some other profession (millers, bricklayers).<sup>79</sup> One of the oldest participants in this pogrom was Juozapas Eidukas, already convicted of bodily harm, whom many of the victims, witnesses, and policemen named as the main organizer of the violence and regarded as completely mentally ill.<sup>80</sup> Also accused in Pašvitinys were the convicted thieves<sup>81</sup> and brothers Julius and Jonas Pacevič (Pocius), who later, in 1902, murdered a Jewish tradesman Leizer Shokhet during an attempted robbery.<sup>82</sup> The participation of such people, some of whom can be described as on the margins of society, in the pogrom suggests that some of the attackers had no particular aims beyond the pogrom but just sought to profit from it or take part in yet another fracas. However, even if, as many witnesses to the Pašvitinys pogrom say, these were the main participants, this still does not present a full social picture of the attackers. As has been said, in one way or another, many people took part in these acts of violence (as many as 1,000 in Pašvitinys), and so it is right to ask what united these mobs. Or, to put it another way, what was the factor integrating the mob?

From our earlier account of the prehistory of the wave of violence and widespread belief that Jewish activities had offended Catholic religious sentiment, it can be presupposed that common religious

77 Accusation, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 2, b. 695, l. 15–16.

78 Accusation, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 460a, l. 49; “Sudebnaia khronika (Anti-evreiskie bezporiadki),” *Budushchnost’* 15 (1902): 296.

79 File “Po obvineniiu krest’ian Kukevicha K., Ivashova P., Eidukasa O. i dr. za uchastie v bezporiadkakh v mest. Poshvity Shavel’skago uezda i izbienie evreev,” *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71.

80 The doctor’s diagnosis of mild insanity, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 629–630; *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 1, 5, 21–22, 42, 50, 65, 66, 68, 70–75, 84, 214, 326. We cannot completely rule out the possibility that the Catholics virtually unanimously blamed Eidukas to deflect attention from other participants in the pogrom. A local Catholic community might believe that Eidukas would not defend himself from the accusations leveled against him, and furthermore, the authorities might leave him alone as someone who was not altogether sane.

81 Court verdict, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 461, l. 12.

82 Court verdict, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 670–684.

identity was an integrating factor for the mob. Since ethnic division of labor had developed historically in Lithuanian countryside, confessional identities coincided with social ones: peasants were Catholic, craftsmen and tradesmen were Jewish, and so on. Thus it is probable that the mob acted as a socio-confessional community. Such a supposition is confirmed in part by evidence from the victims, witnesses, and officials who usually described the accused as Catholics or as peasants. Understandably, identification by others is not the same as self-identification. Further information on this matter can be derived from “deciphering” the pogrom itself.

There were several episodes during the incidents in Ponevezh and Shavli Districts that also help confirm the socio-confessional identity of the mob. At Pašvitinys, as has been mentioned, damage to the synagogue was not just external; as was the case with many private homes, the attackers also tore up religious books.<sup>83</sup> Granted, the general mood for attacking the synagogue was presumably less intense than the desire to ransack private Jewish houses, since on the way from the town center along Linkuva Street, the attackers did not touch the synagogue, and it was only on the way back, at the suggestion of one attacker, that the mob damaged this Jewish place of worship, too.<sup>84</sup> In Pamūšis the windows of a synagogue were also smashed. However, this does not prove that attackers ransacked these buildings because they represented Jewish *religion*. We cannot rule out the possibility that the synagogue or Torah were damaged simply because they were among the many artifacts representing Jews.

Quotes from conversations during the pogrom also support this socio-religious interpretation. When priests attempted to hold back the mob, they were told: “How can we not beat up Jews when in the town of Konstantinovo they murdered a Christian girl, when Jews have desecrated our church and our faith, when they are starting to beat us up here, burn us with vitriol and shoot us! And the police do not defend us or our faith, so we must defend ourselves and our faith by ourselves!”<sup>85</sup> Another story illustrating the importance of religious motivation in these events involves an attempt to organize another

83 Inspection report, *ibid.*, l. 634.

84 Girsh Mer's inquiry minutes, KAA, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 51.

85 Minutes of testimony of Father Z. Zhivotkovskii, LVIA, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 626. The same version is to be found in his report to the bishop of Samogitia, August 23, 1900, LVIA, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 174, l. 570.

pogrom in Konstantinovo on July 2. Here there was a rumor of a future pogrom in which the house of Sheftel Mer, which also doubled as a shop next to the church, would be demolished and replaced with a cross.<sup>86</sup> The presence of Jewish houses, especially shops, in the main square of small towns in Lithuania made sense from a commercial point of view, but interreligious tensions often resulted. Whenever Catholics convinced themselves that Jews were consciously or unconsciously offending their religion, it became dangerous for Jews to be near Catholic places of worship. The Lithuanian press described such sources of tension,<sup>87</sup> and on certain occasions conflicts almost developed into pogroms as at Šilalė (Rossieny District, Kovno Province) in 1901 when peasants, upset over the unpleasant smell drifting into the church from a nearby Jewish house and Jewish mockery of Catholic funeral processions at times when trash was thrown into the churchyard, demolished a Jewish house that stood next to the church.<sup>88</sup>

When discussing the religious aspect of anti-Jewish violence, it is important to examine the role of priests. Both the Konstantinovo policeman Aleksei Borovtsov and the Jewish victims' lawyer who used his evidence in court implied that the Pašvitinys curate Kazimieras Vilkickis had had at least an indirect influence over the local pogrom, as during the violence he apparently asked Borovtsov whether it was true that there was a corpse of a girl killed by Jews lying in the bushes.<sup>89</sup> We should not believe this account unconditionally; after all, the

86 Copy of Ponevezh District police officer report to Kovno governor, July 4, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 10.

87 Kurmis iš K. sodos [?], "Iš Tryszkių [From Tryškiai]," *Tėvynės sargas* 10 (1899): 37; Per. iš Kl. [?], "Triškiai," *Ūkininkas* 9 (1899): 142–143; Cilvakas [?], "Šakiai," *Vilniaus žinios* 100 (1905).

88 File "Predvaritel'noe sledstvie sudebnago sledovatelja 5 uchastka Rossienskago uezda po obvineniiu krest'ian Ivana Pavlova, Osipa Osipova, Petra Semanova i drugikh v razgrome doma i lavki Movshi Grolia v m. Shilel', Kovenskoj gub. 15 avgusta 1901 g.," *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 848. The priest attempted to resolve this issue with the help of the law, but it emerged that Šilalė was defined as an urban settlement, and here the distance that was supposed to be between religious and commercial buildings was shorter than in villages. Thus the Jewish house that stood eight *sazhins* (twenty-four meters) and two *arshines* (two meters) away from the church did not break the law, which set the legally required distance between such building types at five *sazhins*.

89 Borovtsov's inquiry minutes, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 69; "Sudebnaia khronika," 4 (1902): 22.

policeman, like the local authorities, was responsible for maintaining public order and might have feared being held personally accountable if he failed. Thus blaming the cleric would have been a convenient ploy. However, the story cannot be rejected outright either. The curate acknowledged there had been such a conversation but said the question was asked by a female peasant, not him.<sup>90</sup> The priests in Pašvitinys tried to explain themselves by saying that one of them was junior and the other had been absent just before the pogrom and knew nothing of growing anti-Jewish sentiments and so did not attempt to rein in his parishioners with a sermon.<sup>91</sup> There is more evidence of such declarations by local clergy. In court it was claimed that one priest gave sweets to the children of the Gypsies, that is, those who had “unmasked” the Jews. If this was indeed the case, such an act may have been interpreted as thanks for a job well done.<sup>92</sup> According to two Jewish witnesses, after rumors spread of the coming pogrom, they visited the priests in Konstantinovo asking for support but heard from one of the junior clerics, “Is it not true that Jews need Christian blood? Read the newspapers, there was such a case in Vil’na not long ago.”<sup>93</sup> Local priests sent accounts of anti-Jewish violence to the bishop of Samogitia that evinced hostility towards Jews: the Jews themselves were blamed for these incidents, and in effect priests believed blood-libel accusations.<sup>94</sup> The newspaper *Ūkininkas* described this wave of anti-Jewish violence in northern Lithuania and had no doubt that religious hatred towards the Jews was being spread by the Catholic Church.<sup>95</sup>

There can hardly be any doubt that Catholic clergy were the strongest source of religious hatred towards Jews. As already mentioned in this book, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was the Catholic press that fostered anti-Jewish stereotypes most consistently.<sup>96</sup> Even so, the role of Catholic clergy during this

90 K. Vilkickis’s inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 625.

91 K. Vilkickis’s and Z. Zhivotkovskii’s inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 625–626.

92 “Sudebnaia khronika,” 2 (1902): 18.

93 *Ibid.*, 17. The Blondes case is meant here.

94 Priests’ reports to the bishop of Samogitia, *LVIA*, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 174, l. 567, 570, 581–582, 596–597, 608–609, 722–723.

95 P. A-s. [Povilas Višinskis (?)], “Dėlei muštynių,” 27–28.

96 See Chapter Two.

outbreak of violence was not as unambiguous as the witness accounts above might indicate.

In at least two pogroms (in Konstantinovo and Linkuva), priests halted the violence.<sup>97</sup> A priest attempted the same in Pašvitinys, but the mob ignored him.<sup>98</sup> Of course, attempts by clergy to halt pogroms do not mean that they lacked anti-Jewish sentiment. The wish to halt mob violence may have arisen from moral concerns that it was wrong to use violence to resolve problems, or from the rational understanding that such actions could only have negative consequences for Catholic peasants.

Alongside this socio-confessional element uniting the mob, another interpretation holds that *national* identity may have united people during these incidents. In this case the question is not whether most attackers regarded themselves as Lithuanians—they certainly did. For example, in the Pašvitinys case all Catholic accused and witnesses identified themselves, when asked, as Lithuanian or Samogitian.<sup>99</sup> The scale of distribution of the underground press and the events of 1905 in this region, which are often called a national revolution, show that for some of the local Catholics, Lithuanian identity already had a modern nationalist meaning. The important question here is whether national identity was important in the specific case of anti-Jewish violence. It is clear that both confessional (Catholic) and social (peasant) segments were important elements of modern Lithuanian identity,<sup>100</sup>

97 "Sudebnaia khronika," 2 (1902): 16; inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 4–6. Blum, a Jewish doctor, guessed that the Linkuva pogrom did not happen a week earlier (on June 11) because the day before, he had visited the Linkuva priests and asked them to calm their parishioners, and according to Blum, they did: Minutes from Blum's testimony, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 64.

98 Inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 619; minutes from K. Vilkickis's testimony, *ibid.*, l. 625; minutes from police office F. Karveit's testimony, *ibid.*, l. 614 (the same document: *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 64). The governor of Kovno also recognized this clerical role: Circular from governor of Kovno, July 8, 1900 [the document is incorrectly dated 1899], *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1900 m., b. 5, l. 84.

99 At that time "Samogitian" as a rule had an ethnographic meaning, so that such a person also identified with the Lithuanian nation. Sometimes officials and Jews described participants in pogroms in this way: Inquiry minutes, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 127, 128; police report on events at Pamūšis, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 610.

100 The first was particularly important for the Christian Democratic movement; the second was for the liberal and left-wing parties.

but collective identity is a situational phenomenon; that is, it becomes important only in certain episodes of life, and so we can try to see whether *national* identity played some kind of role alongside *socio-confessional* identity, which, as we have seen, was important in the events of 1900.

There are few arguments supporting such a view. In court the victim's lawyer, Naftoli Fridman, cited witness accounts that claimed the attackers had shouted, "It is our land, we are masters here and we can do what we like." Indeed these words, as Fridman noted, are very similar to the slogan "Lithuania for Lithuanians,"<sup>101</sup> which reflects the basic aim of Lithuanian nationalism, namely to gain autonomy and later form an independent state within ethnographic boundaries where Lithuanians would enjoy a dominant role. However, based on the available sources, such slogans were very rare, if they existed at all (no other such accounts have been found). There were no other actions during the pogrom that might have had some symbolic meaning for Lithuanian nationalism. Therefore we may assert that during these pogroms the mobs acted as *socio-confessional*, not *national*, communities.

We should include the rest of the mob, not just those who committed acts of violence, in the composition of this *temporary community*. Some witnesses of the Pašvitinys pogrom, Catholics as well as Jews, claimed that part of the mob, which included minors, just watched events.<sup>102</sup> No evidence suggests that the observers did not approve of the attackers' actions. Certain descriptions of the violence indicate that this case involved not bestial attackers seeking to deal as cruelly as possible with the Jews but a mob that not only wished to restore justice as it understood it but also wanted amusement. Such a conclusion can be based not only on many witnesses' accounts but also certain situations. Thus after Iosel Sher was beaten up in Linkuva, he managed to run away, and peasants standing nearby began to laugh.<sup>103</sup> In Linkuva, some attackers threw stones at windows that were broken long before;<sup>104</sup> this seems to have been a form of entertainment rather than a concerted effort to cause as much damage as possible.

101 "Sudebnaia khronika," 3 (1902): 23.

102 Minutes of interrogations with the victim and a witness, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 71, 185.

103 Minutes of interrogations with I. Sher, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 59.

104 Minutes of interrogations with the witness, *ibid.*, l. 160.

It is also important to note that not all local Catholics participated in, or approved of, this anti-Jewish violence. Sources say that some farmers warned Jews of the imminent pogrom;<sup>105</sup> at Linkuva there were Catholics who tried to talk the mob out of violence;<sup>106</sup> and during investigations there were Catholics who named specific coreligionists who had taken part in the excesses.<sup>107</sup>

Alongside the rumors that boded ill for Jews, the general atmosphere of intimidation was strengthened by Catholic peasant threats against Jews or the justifications they made for their actions. Although some of them were not particularly bad (Jews were “warned” that they would be beaten up<sup>108</sup>), quite often Jews heard that they would be killed.<sup>109</sup> In Konstantinovo, following the alleged kidnapping of a girl, talk spread that “if the Jews use our blood for their Passover, then [the Christians] would use Jewish blood for Easter.”<sup>110</sup> During the pogrom there were calls for the murder of all Jews.<sup>111</sup> In Pašvitinys after the pogrom, rumors spread that a group of peasants had gone into hiding outside the town and would come back at night to murder Jews.<sup>112</sup> Policemen also received death threats.<sup>113</sup>

Not only Jews but their Christian servants were threatened with death.<sup>114</sup> The latter encountered hatred because, according to the Christian point of view, those serving Jews were the lowest social cat-

105 “Sudebnaia khronika,” 3 (1902): 24; minutes of interrogations with the witness, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349, l. 112.

106 Minutes of interrogations with the witness, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 69.

107 Minutes of interrogations with the witness, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 287.

108 Minutes of interrogations with Movsha Kriger, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 59.

109 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, July 13, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps. 1900 m., b. 24, l. 12.

110 Inspection report, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349, l. 256; minutes of interrogations with police officer K. Tabak, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 254.

111 Decision to arrest, *ibid.*, l. 11–12.

112 Minutes of interrogations with the witness, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 619; minutes of interrogations with the victim, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1., b. 71, l. 57; minutes of interrogations with the witness, *ibid.*, l. 73.

113 Minutes of interrogations with the police officer A. Borovtsov, *ibid.*, l. 69; copy of the report by the Kovno District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil’na Palace of Justice, July 31, 1900, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 102, d. 5167, l. 14.

114 Minutes of interrogations with police officer A. Borovtsov, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 69.

egory, lower than shepherds, journeymen, or stablehands, and when animosity towards Jews rose, it also affected those who served them.<sup>115</sup>

Talk of impending murders of those in other religious communities was not unique in Lithuania during that time. A year later (in 1901) rumors spread in Kovno Province that soon Catholics would kill members of other religions, most often Orthodox or Lutherans.<sup>116</sup>

In part, such forecasts in northern Lithuania in 1900 of bloody revenge were confirmed. Some Jews were lightly injured, and in the village of Pamūšis, one Jew (named Gruber) died from his wounds. However, such forecasts came true only in part.

First of all, it is not known for certain whether the attackers in Pamūšis really wanted to kill Gruber or whether it was an unplanned consequence of the violence. Even if the rampaging youths of Pamūšis had truly intended to murder Jews, that does not necessarily reflect the mood of all those who took part in the pogroms.

At Konstantinovo and Linkuva, the first Jews to suffer were in the town square and the streets. Although the mob at Pašvitinys was large, numbering up to 1,000, only a few people fell victim to it. Let us examine in more detail in what circumstances and how violence was inflicted on Jews. The first to suffer was seventy-six-year-old Makhat, who recalled events as follows:

Perhaps twenty people split off from the group approaching Kozlovskii's house; they came up to me and one of them shouted: "We're going to beat up a Jew!" Then, without saying anything, one fellow, whom I did not notice, hit me on my back and I fell; this happened about twenty paces from Bresh's stall. Getting up quickly, I headed for the stall to hide from the mob, and at that moment, as I hid from the mob and at the moment I was close to the door, someone from the mob threw a large stone at me, which injured me below my belt on the left-hand side. I fell across the threshold of the shop as a result of this blow. The Breshes dragged me inside and then they shut the door of the shop and locked it at the same time, then I heard the

115 Such people were labeled in demeaning terms, as Jewgirls, Jew-knaves, or Jewboys: Končius, Žemaičio šnekos, 64–65; Anglickienė, Kitataučių įvaizdis, 146.

116 *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 1, b. 34, l. 91.



mob yell “Hooray, hooray!” At that moment stones flew at the windows of Bresh’s shop and the next-door hostelry, from where a strong clatter and crack could be heard.<sup>117</sup>

The attackers may have been dissuaded from more extreme steps in this case by the appearance of a policeman in the square,<sup>118</sup> but given that the mob later openly disobeyed the police, such an explanation is clearly inadequate. The group of twenty people faced no physical obstacle to the elderly Jewish man. As the victim’s own testimony indicates, this was more a symbolic act of humiliation than a physical aggression in which they really sought to beat up, if not kill, the man. Other Pašvitinys Jewish victims were those who happened to be near the mob as it passed by. Yitzak Gozenput suffered wounds after he came out to beg the mob not to attack his house,<sup>119</sup> and the wife of the chemist Aizik Trusfus, Basia, was injured when she went outside to close the shutters.<sup>120</sup> Although there were threats from the mob that they would drag a certain Jew from his house and beat him up,<sup>121</sup> no such action was taken. In this sense the aforementioned threat to beat up a policeman is interesting; the threat was issued in Russian and Lithuanian.<sup>122</sup> It would have been enough to make such a threat in Lithuanian alone if all they wanted was to mobilize the crowd. Repeating it in Russian was clearly a way of intimidating the officer. Dashel Blum avoided attack because someone recognized him as the doctor and the mob left him alone.<sup>123</sup> It is interesting that in June 1900 a liberal Lithuanian newspaper contained a short report reviewing cases in which Lithuanian intellectuals could not find suitable work in Lithuania because of government policy, while also mentioning that

117 Minutes of interrogation with M. Makhat, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 34.

118 Minutes of interrogation with witness A. Truser, *ibid.*, l. 42.

119 Minutes of interrogations with police officer A. Borovtsov, *ibid.*, l. 68.

120 Minutes of interrogation with assistant chemist I. Vilenskii, *ibid.*, l. 75–76.

121 Minutes of interrogations with the victim, *ibid.*, l. 44.

122 Minutes of interrogations with police officer A. Borovtsov, *ibid.*, l. 69.

123 Minutes of interrogations with D. Blum, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839 l. 64. In fact, not all those living in and around Linkuva could have known Blum, because he had moved to the town just a few months earlier: Vėžys [K. Jasiukaitis?], “Panevėžio pav. Linkava,” *Ūkininkas* 6 (1900): 93.

Blum intended to learn Lithuanian. The fact that Blum had been learning Lithuanian might have made a positive impression on peasants.<sup>124</sup>

This type of violence against persons shows that the mob's determination to deal with Jews physically was not strong.

These acts of violence did more damage to Jewish property than to people. As stated earlier, at the beginning of the first Konstantinovo pogrom, goods in Jewish shops were not only destroyed; some were stolen. Later outbreaks of violence were similar: Jews encountered en route were beaten and Jewish houses were damaged with sticks and stones, but the houses were not robbed or entered.<sup>125</sup>

Strewing goods around may have been simple hooliganism, and stealing them may have been motivated by elementary selfish aims, especially as the attackers included convicted thieves. However, these actions may also have had a symbolic significance, that is, the restoration of economic justice. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the strongest element in Lithuanian antisemitic rhetoric of the day was economic: Jews were blamed for what was seen as unfair economic activity, the exploitation of peasants, cheating, and so on. It was in this context that the liberal Lithuanian newspaper *Ūkininkas* viewed these events: "by destroying and smashing some Jewish shop, people will not get their own shops and free themselves from the Jews who, being more skilled in general in commercial matters, always show the way to backward Lithuanians."<sup>126</sup> During the trial of those involved in the Pamūšis pogrom, a lawyer Vileišis "denounced ethnic and religious enmity between Jews and Lithuanians and pointed to economic reasons behind dissatisfaction felt between commercial and agricultural class-

124 Vėžys [K. Jasiukaitis?], "Panevėžio pav.," 93. Mordechai Zalkin has written about Jewish doctors in nineteenth-century Lithuania: Zalkin, "Mūsų gydytojas," 175–184.

125 Shalom Ioshel Dubovich in Pašvitinys declared that goods worth 100 rubles had been stolen from his shop: victim's interrogation minutes, KAA, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 40. In Linkuva, Movsha Vilenchik claimed that attackers threw out his cobbling tools and even stole some of them: witness's interrogation minutes, LVIA, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 161. However, most sources say that there were no thefts at Konstantinovo. This fact was stressed in particular by the victims' lawyers: "Sudebnaia khronika," 3 (1902): 23 and 4 (1902): 23.

126 [J. Vileišis], "Muštynės su žydais," *Ūkininkas* 10 (1900): 145.

es.”<sup>127</sup> Some of the accused at Konstantinovo themselves were involved in trade, and some Jews gave evidence that in that town the mob gathered near Christian shops, where they were sold vodka.<sup>128</sup> Such evidence would imply that one impetus for violence, at least in Konstantinovo, may have been commercial competition. The situation was slightly different in Pamūšis, where there was a Jewish farming colony and one of the accused complained that Christian farmhands working for the Jews lived in intolerable conditions.<sup>129</sup>

It would be hard to find economic motives for later violence in 1900. In court the lawyers of Jewish victims said that later pogroms did not involve attempts to steal Jewish property because pogrom leaders wanted to control the mob. Apparently it was understood that the expression of greed (theft) might later discredit the pogrom leaders.<sup>130</sup> However, as in the case of spreading rumors, it is difficult to detect any clear organizational structure during pogroms. It is clear that, as in many pogroms, a certain amount of organization was involved.<sup>131</sup> In the mob, people who initiated violence stood on the same side, but they were not connected by any organizational bonds, and there is no evidence or indications of detailed planning.<sup>132</sup> In this sense it is easiest to reconstruct events at Pamūšis. In this case there were only fourteen attackers, and none of them attempted to deny that they were part of the gang that came to the village of Pamūšis. Of course, this does not mean that all their accounts coincided. The adolescent shepherds who formed the majority said that older lads forced them to take part. Meanwhile the older lads claimed that everyone decided together to go to teach the Jews a lesson<sup>133</sup> and “the idea

127 “Sudebnaia khronika. Delo ob antievreiskikh bezporiadkakh v der. Pomushe (Kov. gub.),” *Voskhod* 16 (1902): 24–25. Another publication recorded the lawyer’s words in a similar fashion: “Sudebnaia khronika. (Anti-evreiskie bezporiadki),” *Budushchnost’* 15 (1902): 296.

128 Accusation, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 2, b. 695, l. 12; “Sudebnaia khronika,” 1 (1902): 20–21 and 2 (1902): 16–17.

129 “Sudebnaia khronika. (Anti-evreiskie bezporiadki),” *Budushchnost’* 15 (1902): 296.

130 “Sudebnaia khronika,” 3 (1902): 23.

131 Brass, “Introduction,” 21.

132 Most often witnesses mentioned the young men noted above, some of whom could be termed on the margins of society.

133 Minutes of interrogations with defendant, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349, l. 143–154, 163.

came to them because they had heard that Jews were being beaten up everywhere.”<sup>134</sup>

It is likely they refrained from robbery because they believed that “punishment” of the Jews had to correspond to the nature of the Jews’ supposed misdeeds. Because the Jews’ “crimes” were not economic ones, the punishment was not supposed to be economic. Thus, according to witnesses, the mob at Linkuva shouted that they could “beat up Jews with impunity but could not take anything.”<sup>135</sup> After the event, this kind of violence was justified by the Catholic newspaper *Tėvynės sargas*: “Let the guilty be flogged, but why destroy their goods? That just draws a greater response from the authorities and God’s Judgment.”<sup>136</sup>

Apart from beating Jews it encountered along the way, the mob expended the most energy during these outbreaks of violence in smashing Jewish houses with sticks and stones. Christian houses identified by crosses in the windows were not attacked.<sup>137</sup>

This type of violence, albeit on a different scale, was common in nineteenth-century Lithuania. Such outbreaks of violence against Jews, as mentioned in Chapter Three, were more likely to take place during the rounding up of conscripts. Gangs of young, usually drunken men liked to smash Jewish windows or beat up any Jew they encountered.<sup>138</sup> It is likely that Jews could be victimized under such circumstances for several reasons. For instance, the future soldiers may have attacked them for entertainment, as Jews were a group without rights and with scant protection. It is also possible that Jews were beaten because it seemed that many of their coreligionists avoided military service. The latter reason was voiced in Žeimelis as well.<sup>139</sup>

134 “Sudebnaia khronika. Delo ob antievreiskikh bezporiadkakh v der. Pomushe (Kov. gub.),” *Voskhod* 16 (1902): 24; Accusation, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 460a, l. 48. One of them added that some youths were wandering around Linkuva on June 18 claiming there was permission from the tsar to beat Jews and that there would be a reward for doing so.

135 Minutes of interrogations, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 4.

136 “Teriojimas žydy,” 45.

137 Such information is available in the Pašvitinys case: copy of a report by the Kovno District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil’na Palace of Justice, July 1, 1900, *YIVO*, Elias Tcherikover Archives, file no. 963, p. 74390; report prepared by local police officer, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 611; Minutes of interrogations with police officer A. Borovtsov, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 1, b. 71, l. 68.

138 Grinius, *Atsiminimai ir mintys*, 196–197.

139 Minutes of interrogation with witness, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 461, l. 30–31.

However, there were other situations when Christians thought they had the right and/or a reason to “teach Jews a lesson.”<sup>140</sup>

In general, violence, including group violence, was no uncommon feature of life in Lithuanian villages. Often disagreements among peasants developed into mass brawls that could be even more dreadful than the 1900 pogroms. Sometimes contemporaries called such peasant brawls “pogroms.”<sup>141</sup>

#### JEWS DURING THE POGROM

The 1900 incidents show neither organized nor (meaningful) spontaneous attempts by the Jews to defend themselves.<sup>142</sup> The rumor spread among the mob at Pašvitinys that Jews in the chemist’s shop had fired a gun<sup>143</sup> was a “false alarm”; there was just some chemical reaction, and smoke billowed out. There were several instances of opposition to the attackers. One of these happened in the aforementioned chemist’s shop when the assistant chemist, Iosif Vilenskii, poured sulphuric acid out of the window onto the peasants. Such action merely enraged the mob more. It is important to note that Vilenskii came from Yekaterinoslav Province and began working in the shop only two weeks earlier (on June 13).<sup>144</sup> Thus he was not well aware of the relations between the local groups and their various informal rituals, and he probably believed that he needed to do something because the mob’s actions were illegal. In Pamūšis, Gruber attempted to oppose the mob, and he struck one member of it “with an iron glove,” thereby increasing the wrath of the mob and costing him his life. Meanwhile, many Jews knew the unwritten rules of the game and hid.

140 Grinius, “Atsiminimai,” 80–81, 105.

141 Gukovskii, *Kovenskii uezd*, 49–50; Gukovskii, “Novoaleksandrovskii uezd,” 41; Gukovskii, *Opisanie Rossienskogo uezda*, 70–71; Gukovskii, *Tel’shevskii uezd*, 20–21.

142 When threats of a pogrom arose in 1905, Jews were ready to defend themselves: “Zhagory,” *Poslednie izvestiia* 208 (1905).

143 Minutes of interrogation with witness, *L VIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 618; minutes of interrogation with defendant, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 18. Father Zhivotkovskii’s claim that there were as many as six shots is far removed from reality: *L VIA*, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 174, l. 567.

144 Minutes of interrogation with assistant chemist I. Vilenskii, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 75.

## [RE-]ACTION OF THE AUTHORITIES

Official reactions to events in northern Lithuania in summer 1900 not only showed their views of mass anti-Jewish violence but were also a litmus test of the violence and its scale.

Above all, there is no merit to the claim of the liberal Lithuanian activist Petkevičaitė-Bitė that the authorities organized these pogroms in order to deal with Lithuanian activists who opposed the tsarist government.<sup>145</sup> This version is not supported by any evidence.

Official correspondence implied that the Pašvitinys pogrom was halted by police intervention.<sup>146</sup> However, despite police attempts to intervene in all three cases, none of the pogroms at Konstantinovo, Linkuva, or Pašvitinys was stopped in that way. We know of police attempts to beat back the mobs, not only from their own reports but also from Jewish evidence. At Konstantinovo the mob refused to obey the local policeman, Tabak, and even set free one of the assailants whom he had arrested. The fact that the peasants did not obey local officials was conditioned not only by the peasantry's generally low regard for the police but also by their confidence that the police were on the side of the Jews.<sup>147</sup>

Since the local authorities likely had not expected an outbreak of the "anti-Jewish movement,"<sup>148</sup> they were unprepared for the first two pogroms, and individual police officers who tried were unable to hold back the mob. Only in Pašvitinys were special preparations made in response to intense rumors of an imminent pogrom: three special guards (*etapnye storozha*) and twenty-two policemen from the surrounding district were deployed, but they were unable to halt the rampaging mob.<sup>149</sup> It should be asked whether they were acting sincerely, given that some of the lowest-ranking policemen were local people,

145 Petkevičaitė-Bitė, *Krislai*, 685.

146 Report from the Kovno District prosecutor to the minister of justice, June 30, 1900, *YIVO*, Elias Tcherikover Archives, file no. 963, p. 74389.

147 Accusation, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 2, b. 695, l. 12; minutes of interrogation, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 4; minutes of interrogation with police officers and victims, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 5, 50, 57, 64–67; "Sudebnaia khronika," 4 (1902): 21.

148 Copy of a report by the Kovno District prosecutor, July 1, 1900, sent to the prosecutor, Vil'na Palace of Justice, *YIVO*, Elias Tcherikover Archives, file no. 963, p. 74389.

149 Minutes of interrogation with police officer, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 2843, l. 610.

and some of them were Catholic. In court it was even claimed that the village policemen (*sotniki*, *desiatniki*) “removed their police uniforms during the pogrom and put on other clothes which they obviously were keeping with them, and took part in the pogrom themselves.”<sup>150</sup> The authorities opened investigations against certain policemen concerning their alleged participation in the violence.<sup>151</sup>

Only after the third pogrom, especially when reinforced local police forces proved incapable of halting the mob, did the Kovno Province authorities take more radical measures. Bearing in mind spreading rumors of imminent pogroms in Žagarė and Žeimelis on June 29 and local police reports and pleas from Jews, Cossacks were dispatched to the towns: 100 to Žagarė and fifty to Žeimelis; fifty Cossacks were sent to Konstaninovo in anticipation of a pogrom on July 2. The governor of Kovno himself accompanied the Cossacks to Žagarė. At the same time, other preventative measures were taken; taverns and shops selling alcohol were closed.<sup>152</sup> However, as noted earlier, even the presence of a large Cossack force in Žeimelis and Konstantinovo did not weaken some local Christians’ determination to start yet another pogrom. We can be sure that only the deployment of Cossacks in these towns prevented new pogroms from erupting. It can be asked, of course, why the authorities did not take similar measures before the first incidents.

There are no grounds for suspecting that high-ranking local policemen or the civilian authorities in Kovno Province deliberately allowed the pogroms to take place. Furthermore, it would be difficult to find a rational explanation for such behavior. The June 4 pogrom in Konstantinovo probably caught the local authorities by surprise. Several months had passed since the alleged kidnapping of a young girl, and

150 “Sudebnaia khronika,” 4 (1902): 21. One Jewish witness claimed that during the Linkuva pogrom, a leading role was played by a parish policeman (*sotnik*): “Sudebnaia khronika,” 3 (1902): 22.

151 File “O politseiskom desiatskom Ivane Iur’evе Spal’gene, obv. v prest. po dolzhnosti, presum. 342 st. ulozh. o nak. i o tom zhe Spal’gene i kr. Osipe Pakal’nise, Ivane Kozlovskom i dr., obv. po 1 i 3 ch. 269, 1 i 1 ch. 269 st. ulozh. o nak. v priniatii aktivnago uchastiia v evreiskom pogrome,” *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 460.

152 Reports from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, June 28 and July 5, 1900; Ponevezh District police officer report to Kovno governor, July 4, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 1, 4, 10; Accusation, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 461, l. 10.

perhaps it was possible to consider the story forgotten. Yet, only a few days had passed since the May 30 "Procession" and the last conflict between the priest's workmen and the Jews took place on the eve of the violence, so there was no time left to make long-term preparations for the pogrom. On the other hand, there was no tradition of pogroms in Lithuania, as there was in Ukraine, so local officials may have had reason to hope that ethnic tensions here would not escalate into full-fledged pogroms.

Meanwhile, the possible unwillingness of lower-ranking policemen to halt the violence against Jews or even their active participation in the pogroms should not be treated as a reflection of official policy. It is more likely that they acted not as policemen (i.e., local authority representatives) but as members of their local community.

Granted, some actions by local officials may have had the effect of provoking antisemitic sentiment. At Rozalimas, while looking for illegal publications, officers raided Father Kazimir Kozlovskii's home. Most importantly, when the search was carried out, Jews were summoned as witnesses. The priest and Catholics in general considered Jewish involvement in this matter to be an insult. However, such actions by certain officials were careless and, just as important, the higher authorities understood the danger of such incidents.<sup>153</sup>

Later official actions show that the local authorities intended not to permit pogroms. On July 8 the governor of Kovno instructed district police chiefs of the specific measures they were to take to prevent possible pogroms. They were to follow local moods carefully, especially rumors;<sup>154</sup> they were to halt any brawls as soon as they began and strengthen police power whenever major crowds gathered; they were to arrest suspicious characters and report to the governor all incidents that were a source for concern, and so on.<sup>155</sup> The governor's first

153 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, July 13, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 14–15; report by the curate of Rozalimas, Kazimerz Kozłowski to the bishop of Samogitia, July 12, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 1671, ap. 4, b. 174, l. 722; Žaltauskaitė, "Smurtas prieš žydus," 93–94.

154 The authorities decided to arrest rumormongers even if it might prove difficult to prosecute them later. The most important consideration was that no new pogroms erupt: Report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, July 19, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 16–17.

155 Circular from governor of Kovno, July 8, 1900 [incorrectly dated 1899], *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1900 m., b. 5, l. 83–84. In autumn the governor of Vil'na reminded his subordinates of earlier instructions concerning action to be taken in the face



instruction is interesting: to pass on these instructions to lower-ranking policemen without making them public. In this case, as in other similar situations, the governor almost certainly feared the rise of dangerous rumors, namely that peasants would learn of some sort of “document” connected with anti-Jewish violence and reinterpret it in their own way as a new “permit” for Jew-baiting.

#### AFTER VIOLENCE SUBSIDED

As is typical in such cases, even after violence subsided, interethnic tensions did not disappear. For a short while it even seemed that a new ethnic hierarchy had formed, as after the violence abated and most of the peasants had dispersed, Jews themselves arrested suspects.<sup>156</sup> According to some of the accused, suspects and other Catholics even suffered violence at Jewish hands.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, Jews had no more substantial reason to feel they were now in a superior position. According to a July 8 circular issued by the governor of Kovno, “the mood of the Jews is suppressed and frightened, and that of the Christian population is fervent and threatening.”<sup>158</sup> Occasional threats against Jews or rumors of imminent pogroms spread throughout northern Lithuania in July and August.<sup>159</sup> At Pamūšis one Christian apparently threatened that if all those arrested were not released, all the village Jews would have their throats slit.<sup>160</sup> Some witnesses were apparently afraid even to give evidence against certain assailants, because

of an imminent pogrom. Granted, in this case reaction was to events in the southern and southwestern provinces of the empire rather than to incidents in northern Lithuania: Report from Vil’na governor to Vil’na governor general, October 10, 1900, *ibid.*, 86–87.

156 Minutes of interview with a defendant, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 20.

157 Minutes of interview with a defendant, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 3, b. 839, l. 43, 45–46, 134.

158 Circular from governor of Kovno, July 8, 1900 [incorrectly dated 1899], *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1900 m., b. 5, l. 83.

159 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, July 19, 1900, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 16–17; file “O politseiskom desiatskom Voitekunase, obv. po 274 st. ulozh. o nak. v rasprostranenii sredi krest’ian slukhov o iakoby predstoiashchem izbienii evreev,” *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 515.

160 Inquiry minutes, *LVIA*, f. 445, ap. 1, b. 5349, l. 85.

they feared revenge.<sup>161</sup> The fear of new outbreaks of violence stopped alcohol shops from opening on Sundays and high holidays for some time.<sup>162</sup>

Pogroms or small incidents and subsequent official investigations left their mark not only on both groups but also on specific individuals: victims gave evidence against specific people, and in turn the latter often claimed that the Jews were blaming them to avenge some earlier dispute.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, both groups mobilized their coreligionists as witnesses. Most of the accused denied having taken part in the violence and presented an alibi with evidence from witnesses.

Local Jews were also accused: some of them were suspected of distributing underground proclamations in Lithuanian. In principle this was not impossible; there were cases when Jews smuggled or distributed underground publications not only in Yiddish or Russian but even in Lithuanian.<sup>164</sup> Even so, in this case the matter looks more like revenge: Jews gave evidence against peasants who took part in the violence, and the peasants got back at them by claiming that Jews were distributing illegal proclamations. Giving credence to this interpretation is the fact that men accused of taking part in the Konstantinovo pogrom and their relatives were among those making such accusations against Jews.<sup>165</sup>

Even so, this interethnic tension was not very intense. There are considerable indications that separation and hostility between the two groups was not serious or long-lasting. We have already noted that some Catholics gave evidence against fellow Catholics who had taken part in the violence. Although, as we have said, individual threats against Jews were reported during the late summer, the general atmosphere changed swiftly. In mid-July the chief of police in Ponevezh was quite optimistic about the situation:

161 Minutes of interrogation with witness, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 114.

162 *Ha-melits*, August 12, 1900.

163 Minutes of interview with defendants, *KAA*, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 91, 110, 141, 150.

164 Gudelis [?], "Žydai knygnešiai. (Kazlų Rudoj) [Jewish Book Smugglers (in Kazlų Rūda)]," *Ūkininkas* 6 (1901): 46.

165 File "O raskleike v m. Posvoli i Konstantinove Ponevezhskago uezda (protivopravitel'stvennykh proklamatsii na Litovskom iazyke (obv. kr. Mateush Doroshkevich v ikh rasprostraneni))," *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 2, b. 648. Here we have in mind the Nudas family.

After the arrest of persons involved in the Jewish disorder and some of those who exploited the arousal of the people to propose, via the distribution of proclamations, to form political disturbances, the population has calmed down remarkably: the absurd rumors about permission given to beat up Jews have ceased, and there have been absolutely no reports from Jews that, while walking alone through villages, they have been subject to attack by peasants. On Sunday, July 9, despite significant gatherings of people in Pasvalys, Pumpėnai, Salantai, and Konstantinovo, all was calm. Shops were open, and the Jews did not hide in their houses but mingled with Christians in the crowd.<sup>166</sup>

That mutual relations between the two groups had not been destroyed completely can be seen in the behavior of certain victims. According to the accused, some Jews who had suffered losses proposed that the accused compensate them for their losses, for instance by giving them two geese for their broken windows.<sup>167</sup> If true, such proposals would show that at least some Jewish victims did not regard the pogrom as forming a special boundary in interethnic community relations to divide Catholics and Jews. The possibility of such examples of *gesheft*<sup>168</sup> between victims and victimizers would show that the violence could be interpreted as yet another domestic conflict whose consequences could be regulated peacefully by both sides.

However, these acts of collective violence were not just of local significance. Both the Lithuanian and Jewish press wrote about them, and eventually there were court cases where victims were represented by influential lawyers from the “Jewish street.”

Although press assessment of the incidents discussed here differed in underground Lithuanian newspapers—the Catholic *Tėvynės sargas* did not doubt the abduction of a young girl, while *Ūkininkas* looked for those who spread the superstition of ritual murder—these publications shared common characteristics. Ideologically different newspapers attempted to divert their readers’ attention to other (more

166 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, July 13, 1900, LVIA, f. 378, ps, 1900 m., b. 24, l. 11.

167 Minutes from the evidence of the defendant Antanas Bortkevičius, the appeal of the defendant Antanas Bortkevičius’s mother to the Kovno District prosecutor, KAA, f. I-79, ap. 4, b. 71, l. 244–245, 260.

168 *Gesheft* (deal) is one Yiddish word with which Lithuanians were very familiar.

important) Lithuanian foes. *Tėvynės sargas* wrote that the gentry (Poles) were apparently seeking to blame the Lithuanian nationalists for the pogroms.<sup>169</sup> Thus people were reminded that Poles would try to harm Lithuanians in any situation. The liberal *Ūkininkas* and *Varpas* paid considerable attention to criticism of the police and the imperial authorities in general, as though reminding people who was really the greatest Lithuanian enemy.<sup>170</sup> In court Vileišis in effect blamed the imperial authorities for the Pamūšis incident: they had outlawed the Lithuanian press printed in the Latin alphabet, and so, he maintained, the only source of information available to peasants was rumor.<sup>171</sup> Thus for Lithuanian nationalist leaders, Jews were not a priority in the hierarchy of Lithuanian enemies. These leaders stressed the relevance of other, more important foes: the Poles and the imperial authorities.

Similar strains can be seen in the trial speeches of the victims' lawyers (Ozer Finkelshtein, Naftoli Fridman, M. Tsymkovskii).<sup>172</sup> On the one hand, they demanded severe punishment for the guilty (also so that in the future, no one would believe any alleged *ukaz* permitting the beating of Jews).<sup>173</sup> At the same time, the lawyers claimed there had been certain unrecognized organizers behind the violence. Some of them even implied that priests were involved. Perhaps the

169 "Teriojimas žydų," 44–46. The term "Litvomanes" was used to identify supporters of the Lithuanian national movement.

170 Berželis [?], "Muštinės su žydais," 145–146; T.R. [?], "Dėl mušimo žydų. (Šiauliai–Panevėžis)," *Ūkininkas* 6 (1901): 45–46; R.R. [?], "Panevėžio pav.," *Varpas* 2 (1901): 20–21.

171 "Sudebnaia khronika. (Anti-evreiskie bezporiadki)," *Budushchnost'* 15 (1902): 296; "Sudebnaia khronika," 16 (1902): 24–25.

172 "Sudebnaia khronika," 2 (1902): 17–19; 3 (1902): 23–24; 4 (1902): 21–23.

173 Several dozen persons were convicted; the most severe sentence was eighteen months in jail. Many were found not guilty. From Konstantinovo seventeen were convicted and thirteen discharged; at Pašvitinys the figures were seventeen and eight, respectively. It should be noted that some of the accused went into hiding and were tried later. The case against Eidukas was dropped following medical diagnosis of his mental status: Report by the Kovno District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil'na Palace of Justice, December 7, 1902, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 514, l. 15. The Pamūšis case was postponed because the main accused failed to appear in court: *S. Peterburgskie vedomosti* 12 (1902). In this case punishment was more severe. One of the accused was sentenced to four years in prison, while another received eight years; other sentences were milder: "Sudebnaia khronika. (Anti-evreiskie bezporiadki)," *Budushchnost'* 15 (1902): 296.

lawyers sincerely believed in the existence of such persons, but it is also possible that the attempt to uncover conspirators had an instrumental aim. One of the main ideas these lawyers expressed was that only those on the margins of society took part in the pogroms, while the vast majority of the Lithuanian people had dwelled alongside Jews for centuries in peace and did not break this tradition even during the events of summer 1900. In particular, it is not surprising that Fridman depicted antisemitic attitudes as marginal in Lithuanian society. This was his first public act to reach a wide audience.<sup>174</sup> In later years on the “Jewish street,” he would contribute most to political collaboration between Jews and Lithuanians.<sup>175</sup>

This trial shows another important tendency. Jewish lawyers acknowledged local authorities’ help in defending Jews from further pogroms. Yet at the same time, the lawyers made timid accusations against the central authorities, who discriminated against Jews and led various social strata to believe that Jews lacked rights. In later years liberal Jewish intellectuals would use the pogrom trials not so much to illustrate the guilt of the *pogromshchiki* as to condemn the imperial authorities’ policy towards Jews.<sup>176</sup>

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Specific incidents during the first half of 1900 at Konstantinovo (news of the allegedly kidnapped girl, the Jewish “Procession,” and a domestic dispute between Jews and the priest’s workmen) were among the most important reasons for the pogroms. The fact that the Christian population turned to violence only after three events they perceived as insulting shows that there was little willingness to deal with Jews violently. At the same time, it is clear that there were some more general (structural) changes in this society that facilitated violence. Cases of blood libel occurred in earlier periods, but only from the 1880s did they start to turn into mass violence. Changes in the economy, growing Lithuanian nationalism, and antisemitic tendencies in the underground Lithuanian press were probably what increased anti-Jewish feelings among the Christian population. At the same time, although

174 Fridman, *Der idishe natsional rat*, IV.

175 Bendikaitė, “Fridmanas Naftalis,” 143–144; Sirutavičius and Staliūnas, eds., *A Pragmatic Alliance*, 57, 91, 92, 106, 234–236.

176 Levin, “Preventing Pogroms,” 103.

it is difficult to prove it empirically, pogroms in the south of the Romanov Empire in the early 1880s were among the most influential factors to trigger anti-Jewish violence, because they established the idea that violence against Jews was somehow legitimate.

Peasants in Ponevezh and Shavli Districts used violence against Jews because, as they understood it, an offense had been committed that no one else (especially the authorities) would put right, and Jews would go unpunished. Rumors ran rampant through the mobs; these rumors not only “informed” the peasants of alleged Jewish crimes but also emboldened them and intimidated the Jews. Since Catholic peasant religious sentiments had been affected the most, it was common religious identity that drew them into a temporary community of action. The violence was not entirely spontaneous, especially during the later pogroms. Obviously, there were some individuals who promoted the violence, but the available evidence does not suggest that there was an organized structure that inspired and directed the pogroms. Although some of the assailants were on the margins of society, in the broader sense all sectors of the peasantry took part in the violence. Although the attack on Jews at Pamūšis ended in the death of one Jew, and there were slight injuries during pogroms, the nature of the violence shows clearly that the attackers sought not to kill Jews but to “teach them a lesson.” When Jews were beaten in public spaces, and the doors and windows of their houses smashed, they were not only being punished for their alleged offenses but being shown the clearly delineated boundaries within the local social hierarchy. In public life, Jews were supposed to submit to the monopoly of power wielded by the Catholic community. Thus, this wave of anti-Jewish violence differs fundamentally from the deadly pogroms of the early twentieth century in other provinces of the Jewish Pale of Settlement.



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## Antisemitic Tensions and Pogroms in the Late Imperial Period

In his 1901 book *Magen ha-Talmud* (Shield of the Talmud), Simha ha-Cohen Kahana, the wandering preacher popular in Lithuania and Ukraine, noted that the autocratic regime in the Russian Empire was far more favorable to Jews than the European constitutional democracies. He proposed examining the level of Antisemitism in the Austrian parliament or in France, home of the notorious Dreyfus case. Meanwhile, the tsarist authorities in Russia protected Jews from various expressions of Antisemitism.<sup>1</sup> Inherent in the wandering preacher's words is the idea that, in the age of mass politics autocratic regimes provide more security than liberal political constitutions. This was quickly confirmed to a certain degree in the Russian Empire as well—especially in 1905.

Many of the pogroms in Russia during the 1905 Revolution, especially in late October of that year, were inspired by right-wing Russian or similar groups and were directed not only against Jews but also against other social groups (students and intellectuals in northern and central Russia, and Armenians in the Caucasus, especially in Baku) that were accused of organizing revolutionary chaos and seeking to overthrow the authorities.<sup>2</sup> While older historiography blamed the imperial authorities, including the tsar and his ministers, for the pogroms that took place during the 1905 Revolution, modern scholarship tends to draw more nuanced conclusions. Although there is evidence of the involvement of lower-ranking officials, policemen, or

- 1 Fishman, "The Kingdom on Earth," 230–234. Modern scholarship also notes the greater probability of a pogrom's occurring in liberal rather than autocratic systems: Löwe, "Pogroms," 17. Kahana provides another interesting insight: discrimination against Jews regarding choice of residence and education helped Jews preserve their national identity. The abolition of these restrictions could have led to assimilation.
- 2 According to Stepanov's calculations, during October 1905 alone 1,622 people were killed and 3,544 injured. The nationality of 75 percent of the dead and 73 percent of the injured has been identified. Among Jews, 711 were slain and 1,207 injured: Stepanov, *Chernaia sotnia*, 79–80.



military officers in pogroms or the incitement of antisemitic violence, some scholars assert that neither Nicholas II nor his ministers organized such outbursts. On the other hand, it is recognized that the authorities' discriminatory policies, the tolerance of Antisemitism in the press and indulgent attitudes towards those taking part in pogroms, and similar actions created fertile ground for anti-Jewish violence in the Romanov Empire.<sup>3</sup> Existing studies assert that during the Revolution, when throughout the empire, according to various calculations, between 600 and 700 pogroms took place,<sup>4</sup> there were ten such outbursts in ethnic Lithuania—five each in Vil'na and Kovno Provinces.<sup>5</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, Lithuanian scholars have not paid special attention to this topic. They mention pogroms only briefly and, as a rule, blame the authorities for encouraging them.

#### ANTI-JEWISH TENSION ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

After a few years of relative calm at the beginning of the twentieth century, a new phase of increased ethnic tension occurred in Lithuania starting in the spring of 1903.<sup>6</sup> Alongside the elements of Judeophobic sentiment as a "cultural code" that had existed traditionally in Lithuania and was expressed in accusations of blood libel, which were repeated in 1903 too,<sup>7</sup> this time a few very important additional factors were present to strengthen ethnic tension and especially the anti-Jewish mood in Lithuania.

The increase in the danger of anti-Jewish violence in 1903 was undoubtedly connected with the huge pogrom that took place during the Orthodox Easter celebrations in Kishinev (Bessarabia Province)<sup>8</sup>

3 Podbolotov, "...And the Entire Mass of Loyal People Leapt Up," 193–207.

4 *Die Judenpogrome in Russland*, 189; Shlomo Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement in Tsarist Russia, 1903–06* (Rutgers University, PhD dissertation, 1981), 117.

5 Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement*, 126, 165; Lambroza, "The Pogroms," 228.

6 Secret report from the assistant chief of staff of the Kovno Province gendarmerie for Kovno, Ponevezh, Vil'komir (Ukmergė), and Novoalekandrovsk (Zarasai) Districts to his chief of staff, August 31, 1904, *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 1, b. 94, l. 32–33.

7 "Kovno," *Poslednie izvestiia* 123 (1903). There is evidence of the frequent repetition of such accusations in Vil'na: Spiridovich, *Zapiski zhandarma*, 13; Pavlov, *Opyt pervoi revoliutsii*, 105.

8 Judge, *Easter in Kishinev*; Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement*, 66–76.

that year and slightly later in Gomel' (Mogilev Province),<sup>9</sup> echoes of which resounded throughout the Pale of Settlement.<sup>10</sup> On several occasions in Lithuania, Jews received threats that they would "be dealt with even more strongly than in Kishinev" or something along those lines.<sup>11</sup> A further factor increasing tension was the mobilization of the Russian army, which was fighting a losing war against Japan. The more antisemitic segment of the Russian press blamed the Jews for failure at the front. Jews were accused not only of desertion but also, through their bankers, of providing financial support for the Japanese.<sup>12</sup> These publications and the generally rising atmosphere of hatred towards the Jews throughout the Romanov Empire undoubtedly, as we will see, helped increase Judeophobic sentiment in Lithuania.

It was common for the underground press published by the Bund to accuse the police or army officers of encouraging Judeophobic sentiment in various places in Lithuania. The first indications of a liberalization in the tsarist regime and potential concessions to other nationalities indeed may have intimidated certain army officers loyal to the regime and encouraged them to "establish order" themselves.<sup>13</sup> According to the press, talk spread in the Vil'na garrison that "sedition" needed to be suppressed because "the Poles and Jews wished to take Vil'na away from the Russians."<sup>14</sup> In earlier years too, when conscripts were recruited into the army, increases in interethnic tension were noted, and Jews were overcome by the fear of possible pogroms. It is likely that in 1904, conscripts destined for the front felt they had more rights to "establish order," or more precisely, to punish the Jews because many of them had reportedly avoided service in the tsar's army by fleeing abroad.<sup>15</sup> In this way, according to local officials, the threat of a pogrom had arisen in Ukmergė (Vil'komir), where conscripts

9 Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement*, 101–103.

10 "Reznia evreev v Kishiniove," *Poslednie izvestiia* 121 (1903); Dubnov, *Kniga zhizni*, 265.

11 "Shavli," *Poslednie izvestiia* 139 (1903); Richter, "Kišinev or Linkuva?" 117–130.

12 Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement*, 91–93.

13 "Ponevezh," *Poslednie izvestiia* 103 (1903); "Suvalki," *ibid.*, 151 (1903).

14 "Vil'no," *ibid.*, 133 (1903).

15 Secret report from the assistant chief of staff of the Kovno Province gendarmerie for Kovno, Ponevezh, Vil'komir (Ukmergė), Novoalekandrovska (Zarasai) Districts to his chief of staff, October 21, 1904, *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 1, b. 94, l. 35.

from Mogilev Province were stationed.<sup>16</sup> The incident that took place in Rokiškis (Kovno Province) should perhaps be classified as a pogrom. Information collected by the gendarmes shows that “during conscription in the town of Rokiškis on November 2 [1904], the conscripts caused disturbances [*bezporiadki*], in the course of which windows were smashed in many Jewish shops and homes.”<sup>17</sup>

The underground Bund press and official reports not only from Vil’na<sup>18</sup> and Kovno<sup>19</sup> but also from many small Lithuanian towns such as Kėdainiai,<sup>20</sup> Žagarė, Kaltanėnai (Rossieny District), Boruvka (near Ukmergė), Troškūnai (Ukmergė [Vil’komir] District),<sup>21</sup> Aleksandrovsk (Tel’shi District),<sup>22</sup> and certain places in Suvalki

16 Secret reports from the assistant chief of staff of the Kovno Province gendarmerie for Kovno, Ponevezh, Vil’komir (Ukmergė), Novoalekandrovsk (Zarasai) Districts to his chief of staff, October 21, 1904, and November 24, 1904, *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 1, b. 94, l. 35, 39–40.

17 Secret report from the assistant chief of staff of the Kovno Province gendarmerie for Kovno, Ponevezh, Vil’komir (Ukmergė), Novoalekandrovsk (Zarasai) Districts to his chief of staff, November 6, 1904, *ibid.*, l. 36.

18 Report from Vil’na governor to Vil’na governor general, June 5, 1903, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1903 m., b. 52, l. 3; “Vil’no,” *Poslednie izvestiia* 125 (1903); “Vil’no,” *ibid.*, 133 (1903); “Vil’no,” *ibid.*, 157 (1903); official letter from the head of the Police Department to Vil’na governor, October 3, 1903, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1903, d. 555, bukva B, l. 8; file “Raport pristava o zaderzhanii Kmechinina Geshelia Davidovicha za rasprostranenie im lozhnago slukha ob izbienii evreev v g. Vileike,” *LVIA*, f. 420, ap. 2, b. 1668.

19 “Maiskie dni v Kovne,” *Poslednie izvestiia* 132 (1906); “Kovno,” *ibid.*, 149 (1903); secret report from Kovno deputy governor to Vil’na governor general, June 22, 1903, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1903 m., b. 52, l. 8.

20 “Keidany,” *Poslednie izvestiia* 129 (1903).

21 Secret report from Kovno deputy governor to Vil’na governor general, June 22, 1903, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1903 m., b. 52, l. 7–8. Such rumors spread in Žagarė at the end of 1904: Secret report from the assistant chief of staff of the Kovno Province gendarmerie for Kovno, Ponevezh, Vil’komir (Ukmergė), and Novoalekandrovsk (Zarasai) Districts to his chief of staff, November 22, 1904, *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 1, b. 94, l. 37.

22 Secret report from chief of staff of the Kovno Province gendarmerie to the Police Department, May 26, 1904, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1903, d. 555, t. 2, l. 195; report from chief of staff of the Kovno Province gendarmerie to Kovno governor, May 26, 1904, *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 1, b. 632, l. 23.

Province<sup>23</sup> mention that there were rumors that on a certain day, usually during Christian or Jewish holy days, Jews would be “dealt with”; that insults had been exchanged; and that there had been small conflicts in which the parties involved were obviously divided along ethnic/religious lines.

Probably the greatest tension arose in late June and early July 1903 in Shavli, after a Christian was cut by a knife in a conflict between two Christian customers and Jewish cobblers. Rumors spread quickly in Shavli and the surrounding area that “Jews had knifed a Christian,” and two opposing mobs began to gather in the town. However, no pogrom began. According to the Bund, the Jews themselves drove out the assembled Christian mob. Other sources (from the authorities) say that a conflict was averted by the intercession of the police and the arrival of Cossacks, who remained in Shavli until mid-July.<sup>24</sup>

Jewish reaction to the increased danger of pogroms varied widely.<sup>25</sup> As in earlier years, the leaders of Jewish communities in various large and small towns appealed to the authorities to defend them, often offering considerable sums of money.<sup>26</sup> Some rabbis strove to demonstrate loyalty to the authorities and urged their flock not to join the revolutionary movement.<sup>27</sup> Radical Jewish groups set about

23 Trudelis [?], “Naumiestic. Baimė be reikalo [Naumiestic. Fear Without a Reason],” *Ūkininkas* 4 (1904): 154; Excerpt from intercepted letter with inscription “Bal’verzshishki, Suvalki Province, September 23, 1903, to Moisei Shapiro in Warsaw, Dikaia St 40–32,” *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1903 g., d. 555, l. 247.

24 Secret report from Kovno deputy governor to the Police Department, August 8, 1903; copy of the report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, June 25, 1903, copy of the report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, July 16, 1903, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1903 g., d. 555, t. 2, l. 14, 15–16, 17–20; official letter from the head of the Police Department to Kovno governor, July 31, 1903; excerpt from intercepted letter from Iakov Leizerovich of Kovno, dated July 8, 1903, addressed to Bronshtein in Warsaw, Sennaia St, 76–31 for Leizerovich, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1903 g., d. 555, l. 203, 220; “Shavli,” *Poslednie izvestiia* 136 (1903); “Shavli,” *ibid.*, 139 (1903).

25 For more on this issue, see V. Levin, “Preventing Pogroms,” 95–110.

26 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, May 26, 1903; secret report from Kovno deputy governor to Vil’na governor general, May 6, 1903; report from Kovno deputy governor to Vil’na governor general, June 22, 1903, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1903 m., b. 52, l. 1–2; 6; “Maiskie dni v Kovne,” *Poslednie izvestiia* 132 (1903); “Shavli,” *ibid.*, 139 (1903).

27 Fishman, “The Kingdom on Earth,” 227–259.

organizing self-defense. Agitation had activated responses by the Bund and other left-wing groups to the Kishinev and Gomel' pogroms and their possible repetition in other places. The Bund blamed the authorities for these pogroms and sought to mobilize the Jewish masses for revolutionary action.<sup>28</sup>

#### HOW HATRED TURNED INTO VIOLENCE: THE YEARS OF THE 1905 REVOLUTION

As far as can be determined from research on the pogroms, mass violence erupting over a major area became most likely when a pogrom initially took place in a city and was repeated later in smaller surrounding towns or even villages. Therefore this analysis of the situation in Lithuania shall begin during the 1905 Revolution in the large cities of Vil'na and Kovno.

Data collected by the Union for the Equal Rights of Jews in Russia said that there was one pogrom in the Vil'na suburb of Nova Vileika and another in the city itself,<sup>29</sup> and the press reported that pogroms

28 Files "O soderzhanii v g. Svetsianakh Khany Kovarskoi za chtenie (prestupnoi) proklamatsii 'Pogrom v Gomele' na russkom iazyke," *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 1, b. 423; "O rasprostranении 18 i 20 Oktiabria sего goda v m. Utsianakh, Vil'komirskago uezda, vozzvanii (prestupnogo soderzhaniia) na russkom iazyke 'Pogrom v Gomele,' izdannoi ot imeni Kovenskogo sotsialdemokraticeskogo komiteta," *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 2, b. 830; "Ob obnaruzhenii 30 Sentiabria i 1 Oktiabria 1903 goda v m. Keidanakh dvukh vozzvanii (prestupnogo soderzhaniia) Kovenskogo sotsial demokraticeskogo komiteta (2 ch. 252 st. Ulozh. o Nak.) ('Pogrom v Gomele,' "Rabochie pod gnetom"), *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 2, b. 818; "Reznia evreev v Kishiniove. Vozvanie Tsen. Kom. Bunda po povodu kishinevskoi boinii (perevod s evreiskogo)," *Poslednie izvestiia* 126 (1903); "Proklamatsiia kov. Komiteta Bunda o kishin. pogrome," *ibid.*, 132 (1903); "Kovno," *ibid.*, 147 (1903); "Kovno," *ibid.*, 149 (1903); secret report from the head of the Kovno Police Department to the Police Department, September 15, 1903, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1903 g., d. 555, t. 2, l. 46; secret report from the head of Vil'na Police Department to the head of the Police Department, May 23, 1903; secret report from the head of the Kovno Police Department to the Police Department, July 17, 1903; translation of proclamation from Yiddish to Russian, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1903 g., d. 555, l. 122, 204, 205.

29 Two lists of places where pogroms took place, *RGIA*, f. 1565, op. 1, d. 67, l. 1, 7.

had broken out in the “capital” of the Northwestern Region.<sup>30</sup> However, a general conclusion drawn from various sources shows unambiguously that at that time, as indeed at other periods during the nineteenth century, there was no mass violence against Jews or their property in Vil’na.<sup>31</sup> This, of course, does not mean that ethnic tension did not increase during the Revolution or that, more specifically, there was no danger of a pogrom erupting.<sup>32</sup> A particularly tense situation developed in Vil’na in October–December 1905 and June 1906. In both these cases the main source of tension came not only from outside Vil’na itself but also from outside Lithuania. At the end of 1905 and in June 1906, anti-Jewish pogroms in other provinces of the empire became the main source of tension in Vil’na.

In October 1905, after Nicholas II had promulgated his constitutional manifesto, which was welcomed by many democratic groups, Russian right-wing forces rose in defense of the old regime, and in many parts of the empire, they targeted the Jews. Violence against Jews was explained as an attempt to defend the imperial authorities from the destructive activities of alleged (Jewish) revolutionaries. On the basis of such “logic,” pogroms were planned in Vil’na as well. A Russified Latvian, Jānis Sproģis (Ivan Sprogis), wrote in his diary about the event, which apparently took place on October 19. A policeman told him that peasants gathered in Vil’na were asking the governor general of Vil’na for a permission to “have a ball on Jews” [poguliat’ nad evreiam].<sup>33</sup> Many sources that record agitation or even attempts to provoke violence against Jews are connected with the activities of certain local police officers, army officers, or Russian right-wing activists,

30 They were denied later: “Evreiskaia zhizn’,” *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni* 41–42 (1905): 31; “Za nedeliu,” *Voskhod* 42–43 (1905): 46.

31 This is recorded in memoirs, for example: Sh. Levin, *The Arena*, 286; Sh. Levin, *Forward from Exile*, 402–403.

32 There were always small fights caused by ethnic hatred. There were also cases of this during the revolution. One such fight occurred after a conflict in a restaurant between several conscripts and Jews working as stevedores on river timber cargoes after the conscripts commented loudly, “see how the Yids drink”: undated police sergeant report, *LVIA*, f. 420, ap. 2, b. 909, l. 125.

33 Sproģis diary, entry of October 19, 1905, *LVVA*, f. 2320, apr. 1, l. 7, lp. 85.

who are often called “members of the Black Hundreds.”<sup>34</sup> The same could be said of many other cases of anti-Jewish agitation or ethnic violence recorded later in 1906.<sup>35</sup> Among certain groups of the Vil’na population, such as workers and civil servants, Judeophobic sentiments were indeed widespread,<sup>36</sup> but not to a degree that would have allowed defenders of the “old order” to provoke pogroms. Among Polish-speaking Vil’na Catholics, anti-Jewish sentiments were also strong. Even Bishop Edward von der Ropp of Vil’na did not hide his antipathy to the Jews, but at that time he told his flock not to take part in pogroms in any way.<sup>37</sup> The bishop’s stance was conditioned most like-

- 34 Telegram from Kotovich to S. Vitte, October 22, 1905, *YIVO*, RG 80 (Elias Tcherikover Archives), file no. 967, p. 74526; telegram from the head of *okhranka* in Vil’na to the Police Department, *ibid*; copy of the report from the governor general of Vil’na to S. Vitte, October 30, 1905, *ibid.*, 74528–74529; “Kronika krajowa. Wilno. Widmo pogromu,” *Kurjer Litewski* 80 (1905); “Vilniuje [in Vil’na],” *Vilniaus žinios* 287 (1905); *Gosudarstvennaia Duma*, 1729–1730; diary of Jānis (Ivan) Sproģis, entry of October 19, 1905, *LVVA*, f. 2320, apr. 1, l. 7, lp. 85. There are such reports also from 1906: “Juodašimčių atsišaukimai [Black Hundreds’ Appeals],” *Vilniaus žinios* 26 (1906); “Vilniuje. ‘Juodosios šimtinės’ darbai [In Vil’na. Black Hundreds’ Deeds],” *ibid.*, 162 (1906); Klaus Richter, “Bereitet euch zum Selbstschutz vor,” 323.
- 35 “Kronika miejska. Działalność czarnosecinowa,” *Gazeta wileńska* 82 (1906); “Dnevnik,” *Svobodnoe slovo* 167 (1906); “Vilniuje [In Vil’na],” *Vilniaus žinios* 124 (1906); “Evreiskaia zhizn’,” *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni* 21 (1906): 25.
- 36 One gendarme reported from Vil’na that “a resolution was passed at a workers’ meeting to beat up Jews”: Gendarmerie officer Shybako’s ciphered telegram to the Police Department, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1905 g., 2 otd., d. 2000, ch. 26, l. 1a; Nones, “Vilne,” 176.
- 37 “Z Bożej i Stolicy Świętej Łaski Edward Ropp, Biskup Wileński. Kochani Katolicy Djecezejalnie!” *Kurjer Litewski* 39–45 (1905). A similar position was laid out in an article in *Kurjer Litewski*: Ener. [?], “Żydzi i my,” *ibid.* 51 (1905). One later pastoral letter from von der Ropp revealed the bishop’s view of the Jews to his flock clearly: one should be on guard against their trickery but not hurt them. Thus the collective image of Jews in von der Ropp’s rhetoric was clearly negative: “Jews also dwell among us. These unfortunates do not know Christ and devote little time to God and eternity, although internally they pray often, but only profit and money are important to them. Therefore often they harm us and deceive us, and in recent times they have been inviting us to join in sedition and disturbances”: “List pasterski,” *Dziennik Wileński* 35 (1906). Similar accusations that Jews were instigating peasants were also repeated at the end of 1906: Edward, bp. w., “Odpowiedź ks. Biskupa wileńskiego,” *Kurjer Litewski* 237 (1906).

ly not only by Christian virtues but also by rational political calculation, that is, the realization that violence would not help resolve any problems but would only give the authorities a pretext to further repress the local population. Left-wing and democratic groups as well as various professional organizations also campaigned against pogroms.<sup>38</sup>

A similar situation developed in the wake of the Belostok pogrom of June 1–3, 1906. Rumors began to spread in Vil'na that a pogrom would take place there, too.<sup>39</sup> These rumors were strengthened by the fact that a large Catholic Corpus Christi procession was due to take place in Vil'na on June 3, and the Belostok pogrom, as we know, began from a provocation during two religious (Catholic and Orthodox) processions.<sup>40</sup> In Vil'na and Kovno, rumors began to spread that Jews intended to avenge the suffering of their coreligionists in Belostok, which would most likely give rise to even greater discontent and violence by local Christians.<sup>41</sup> The rumor also spread that a bomb could be thrown into the procession, as had been done in Belostok.<sup>42</sup> Various persons and institutions attempted to thwart any possibility of disturbances in Vil'na: unnamed Polish and Russian representatives appealed to the city council to ask the bishop to postpone the procession.<sup>43</sup>

38 To the citizens of Vil'na, *CAHJP*, 1 (S.M. Dubnov archive)/3, pages unnumbered; Dubnov, *Kniga zhizni*, 291–292; “Dnevnik,” *Novaia zaria* 1 (115) (1905); “Dnevnik,” *ibid.*, 7 (120) (1905); V. Levin, “Preventing Pogroms,” 99.

39 “Evreiskaia zhizn',” *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni* 25 (1906): 40. These rumors persisted until the end of the month. A further stimulus for them to persist was a provocation by a prison warder who fired a shot himself and began to yell “the Jews are shooting” and spread antisemitic proclamations: *ibid.*; telegram from governor general of Vil'na to interior minister, June 23, 1906, telegram from Duma Member S. Levin to interior minister, June 23, 1906, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1906 g., 2 deloproizvodstvo, d. 550, l. 234, 239; secret report from the head of Vil'na gendarmerie to the Police Department, July 1, 1906, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1906 g., 2 deloproizvodstvo, d. 550, t. 2, l. 13.

40 For more on this, see Chapter Six.

41 Report from the head of the Vil'na secret police to the Police Department, June 12, 1906, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1906 g., 2 deloproizvodstvo, d. 550, l. 93.

42 Grazhdanin [?], “Pis'mo v redaktsiiu,” *Svobodnoe slovo* 13 (1906); Michał Römer, “Stało się,” *Gazeta wileńska* 62 (1906); ciphered telegram from gendarmerie officer in Vil'na to the director of the Police Department, June 3, 1906, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1906 g., 2 deloproizvodstvo, d. 550, l. 38.

43 “Vilniuje [In Vil'na],” *Vilniaus žinios* 118 (1906); “Kronika miejska. W obawie pogromu,” *Gazeta wileńska* 63 (1906).



The city council<sup>44</sup> and the governor<sup>45</sup> appealed to the population, and von der Ropp himself made an appeal to his flock.<sup>46</sup> In this context, the stance taken by the representatives of Jews in Vil'na is interesting. Unlike the aforementioned Polish and Russian representatives, and the general attempt of the authorities to stop religious processions after the Belostok pogrom,<sup>47</sup> the Jews proposed that the procession go ahead, because the long-suffering Catholics might be aggravated if the procession were forbidden, especially if they suspected that Jews were in any way responsible.<sup>48</sup> We cannot doubt the rationale behind such an analysis of the situation. At the same time such a proposal suggests that, despite the spreading rumors, the leaders of the Vil'na Jews did not detect the same danger of a pogrom as in the case of Belostok.

Because of bad weather, the procession was postponed from Saturday, June 3, to Sunday, June 4,<sup>49</sup> and took place without incident. Vladimir Medem, one of the more active Jewish socialists of the day, described the Catholic procession and the concomitant fear of a pogrom in his memoirs in a somewhat self-deprecating way. As he recalled, there was great tension, because people feared a repeat of the incident in Belostok. Suddenly there was an explosion. Medem was convinced that a provocateur had thrown a bomb into the procession. Only the lack of a reaction from those around him "reminded" him that a cannon was fired on Vil'na's Castle Hill at noon every day.<sup>50</sup> The con-

44 "Grazhdane gor. Vil'no!" *Svobodnoe slovo* 46 (1906); Zarząd miasta Wilna, "Obywatele miasta Wilna!" *Gazeta wileńska* 63 (1906).

45 "Evreiskaia zhizn'," *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni* 26 (1906): 34.

46 Edward Ropp, "Do katolików m. Wilna. Odezwa," *Kurjer Litewski* 123 (1906); Jurkowski, "Edward Ropp," 246; Kozyrska, *Arcybiskup Edward Ropp*, 91. For more on Ropp's activities, see Staliūnas, "Vilniaus vyskupo," 142–219.

47 Report from temporal Grodno governor to Vil'na governor general, June 12, 1906; telegram from Krshitskii to Ropp, June 12, 1906, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1906 m., b. 44, l. 28–30.

48 "Vilner kronik [Vil'na Chronicle]," *Folkstsaytung* 81 (1906): 5; "Dnevnik," *Svobodnoe slovo* 14 (1906); Michał Römer, "Usiłowania prowokacyjne w Wilnie," *Gazeta wileńska* 63 (1906).

49 "Vilnius," *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 25 (1906): 325–326; "Kronika krajowa. Wilno. Procesja," *Kurjer Litewski* 122 (1906).

50 Medem, *The Life*, 389–390.

cluding sections of this chapter will revisit the question of whether the absence of pogroms in Vil'na should be connected with the efforts made by the authorities and the city's elite (members of the city Duma, the bishop of Vil'na, and so on), or whether there were also other reasons for this.

We have less information about increased ethnic tension in Kovno. However, here too, as in Vil'na, there were several periods when Jews felt a pogrom might be imminent. The first wave of rumors concerning a possible pogrom occurred in April–June 1905. According to the Bund press, the number of minor incidents increased markedly and pogroms were avoided only because of worker solidarity and the actions of the Bund. According to reports in *Di arbayter-shtime* (Voice of the Workers) and *Poslednie izvestia* (Latest News), anti-Jewish feeling among Christians in Kovno and its environs was the reason for such conflicts.<sup>51</sup> Another period of increased tension, in Kovno as well as in other places within the empire, came after the October 17 Manifesto, when loyalists in Kovno wished to organize patriotic demonstrations.<sup>52</sup> The left-wing Jewish press accused Governor Petr Verevkin of Kovno of spreading antisemitic propaganda.<sup>53</sup> However, Jewish public figures representing the conservative part of the community regarded him as a protector and, at the end of 1905, even officially expressed their gratitude to him.<sup>54</sup>

Although sometimes news of a pogrom breaking out in some small town in Lithuania would not be confirmed<sup>55</sup> and information about increased Christian antipathy to the Jews would be denied by figures

51 "Kovne," *Di arbayter-shtime* (September 1905): 28–29; "Kovno," *Poslednie izvestiia* 241 (1905): 8; "Kovno," *ibid.*, 244 (1905): 1–2. A Kovno activist from the Union for the Equal Rights of Jews in Russia writes of fears of a pogrom, too: Ia. Bakhrakh's letter to Mikhail Izraelevitch [?], *RGIA*, f. 1565, op. 1, d. 26, l. 5.

52 *Pamiatnaia knizhka Kovenskoï gubernii na 1906 god*, 42.

53 "Kovno," *Poslednie izvestiia* 240 (1905): 5. The governor even received an anonymous letter threatening him or a member of his family with death if a pogrom took place, and he was advised not to permit a patriotic demonstration: letter written by a Vil'na member of the Socialist Revolutionary party to P. Verevkin on October 28 [probably 1905], *LNMMB RS*, f. 19, b. 1687, l. 1.

54 *Pamiatnaia knizhka Kovenskoï gubernii na 1907 god*, 72.

55 "Za nedeliu," *Voskhod* 16 (1905): 27; "Shavli," *Poslednie izvestiia* 251 (1905): 6–7.

from various Jewish political factions,<sup>56</sup> there was undoubtedly more ethnic tension, particularly regarding the Jews, in Vil'na, Kovno, and Suvalki Provinces in 1905–1906 than in “normal” years.

Some of the Judeophobic agitation in smaller towns, as in the larger ones, was connected to pro-imperial forces. Left-wing publications in various languages often blame local officials for trying to trigger pogroms. Such cases are recorded in various places within Kovno Province (Šaty, Linkuva, Kupiškis)<sup>57</sup> and certain parts of Vil'na Province (Ignalina).<sup>58</sup> Old Believers at Jonava (Kovno Province), who, according to various sources, as in other places, were noted for their support of the old order, were most inclined to commit violence against Jews<sup>59</sup> and were prepared to organize a pogrom against Jews who allegedly hindered the normal recruitment of conscripts to the army and organized anti-government meetings.<sup>60</sup> The danger of a pogrom erupting in Ukmergė should be linked to Russian Black Hundreds brochures and articles, *Druzheskii sovet evreiam* (Friendly Advice to Jews), issue 453 of the newspaper *Zaria* (Dawn), and the publications *Pokorenje*

56 It was reported from Ponevezh that the “recent increase in antisemitic agitation has had no effect at all on relations between Lithuanians and Jews”: Letter from the Union for the Equal Rights of Jews in Russia, Ponevezh department, to the Central Bureau, October 8, 1906, *RGIA*, f. 1565, op. 1, d. 114, l. 28. The same opinion was voiced in a later letter, sent on November 29, 1906, *ibid.*, l. 29–30. There were also no tensions in Oshmiany district (Vil'na Province): letter from Abelovich to unknown person/institution (most likely to the Central Bureau of the Union for the Equal Rights of Jews in Russia), April 4, 1906, *RGIA*, f. 1565, op. 1, d. 205, l. 1A.

57 “M. Shaty,” *Poslednie izvestiia* 237 (1905): 2; “Za nedeliu,” *Voskhod* 51–52 (1905): 32; “Plėšimai ir kiti nedori darbai. Kupiškis [Robbing and Other Unjust Deeds in Kupiškis],” *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 29 (1906): 396.

58 “M. Ignalino (Vil. gub.),” *Novaia zaria* 3 (1905); “Evreiskaia zhizn',” *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni* 43–44 (1905): 45.

59 *Gosudarstvennaia Duma*, 1730; “Dnevnik,” *Novaia zaria* 54 (1905); see also file “Ob antievreiskikh bezporiadkakh i o proiavlenniiakh evreiami nasiliia nad khristianami. Po Vitebskoi gubernii,” *GARF*, f. 102, 4 deloproizvodstvo, 1905 g., d. 2000, ch. 7, l. 7, 18.

60 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, August 24, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 13, l. 170.

*mira evreiami* (World Conquest by Jews) and *Gde kroetsia prichina smuty* (Where the Reason for Revolt is Hidden).<sup>61</sup>

However, in many cases the causes recorded in various sources for pogroms in various places in Lithuania were not associated with the activities of civil servants or Russian loyalists. In other words, antipathy towards the Jews was generated within society itself. The oft-cited information on the rise of ethnic tension indicates that the reasons for most of this derived from daily life. The case of Vieškėnai (Shavli District, Kovno Province) once again illustrates how strong traditional anti-Judaic sentiment was in Lithuanian countryside.<sup>62</sup>

On June 17, 1907, Hirsh Tsivtson beat his daughter at home. She had spent the night out of the house, and local Catholics thought they heard a woman crying out in Lithuanian, "Jesus, Mary!" and "Ah!" Rumor spread quickly throughout the small town that in Tsivtson's house a Catholic woman had been killed, and a mob of around 2,000 gathered at the houses of Tsivtson and his neighbor Khaim Geichled, where the corpse was alleged to have been buried. The mob threatened violence against Jews. Disobeying and even threatening the police, the mob searched Tsivtson's house. According to local officials, the mob was stopped by the police sergeant and the local priest, Iosif Zaleski, but it is equally likely that the mob settled down because no corpse was found. Tension persisted until at least June 26, when a large fair was scheduled to be held in Vieškėnai. At least three aspects of this situation are worth noting. First, the suspicion of local Catholics that a Jew had slain a Christian girl was undoubtedly connected to the deeply held superstition that Jews needed Christian blood for their religious rites.<sup>63</sup> On this occasion suspicion did not lead to violence,

61 Telegram from Ukmergė (Vil'komir), addressed to the interior minister; secret report from the head of Kovno gendarmerie to the Police Department, June 19, 1906; Sh. Levin's telegram to P. Stolypin, June 26, 1906; report from Kovno governor to the interior minister, June 25, 1906, *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1906 g., 2 deloproizvodstvo, d. 550, l. 86, 181, 230, 267; Ukmergietis [?], "Ukmergės vergai [Ukmergė's Slaves]," *Lietuvos ūkininkas* 35 (1906): 450–451; *Pamiatnaia knizhka Kovenskoi gubernii na 1907 god*, 92.

62 Files "O bezporiadekakh imevshikh mesto 17 iunia 1907 g. v m. Vekshniakh," *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 23875; "Predstavleniia prokurora Kovenskogo okruzhnogo suda o napadenii tolpy krest'ian na kvartiru Girsha Tsivtsona v m. Vekshne," *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 7, b. 829.

63 For more on blood libel, see Chapter One.

most likely because no one had in fact disappeared and no girl's corpse was found. Second, this incident may have had as a subtext economic rivalry between local Jews and newly established Catholic tradesmen. One of the accused was a watch-mender, and several were involved in trade. One of those prosecuted, Jonas Vaičius,<sup>64</sup> said in his defense that he had not encouraged any violence against the Jews and admitted that "rather than indulge in violence against the Jews, I advised [the peasants] to sell all their [goods] to me and not to buy anything from Jews and in that way force them to leave the town and go off to America... I only talked them into not buying anything from the Jews and [purchasing everything] in Christian shops; and I proved to them that this was useful; that was only where my agitation lay, and the Jews have found out about it now, and they have used this sad event to accuse me of a crime I have not committed."<sup>65</sup> Third, the mob obviously did not obey police officers and even threatened to get even with them. This reveals that the authorities' standing was low and that the populace wished to establish "their own order."

Even so, most often in cases known from the 1905 Revolution in Lithuania, specific pretexts were linked with some kind of dispute from everyday life (such as at Šiaulėnai,<sup>66</sup> Jonava,<sup>67</sup> or Papilė<sup>68</sup>). The period of increased danger, as in earlier times, coincided with the recruitment of conscripts (as at Biržai, Kovno Province).<sup>69</sup> In other cases all the available information is very scant, saying that Jews feared a pogrom might erupt, or that someone was engaging in anti-

64 All the convicts were men aged between forty and fifty. They received several months of detention each, but the authorities later reduced this to one month.

65 Minutes of a poll, June 22, 1907, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 23875, l. 25–26.

66 Report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, July 29, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 13, l. 108.

67 Secret memo from governor of Kovno to governor general of Vil'na, August 10, 1905, *ibid.*, l. 134. This conflict arose after someone, calling himself Pavel Sirutavičius and claiming to be a secret police agent, reported a Jew to the authorities for being a revolutionary. After the accusation turned out to be groundless, Sirutavičius himself became a suspect, but the Jews decided to teach him a lesson themselves and seriously injured him, thereby angering the Christians greatly.

68 Papilietis [?], "Papilė," *Vilniaus žinios* 149 (1906).

69 Beržas [?], "Jaunųjų kareivių dvasia [The Spirit of Young Soldiers]," *Naujoji gadyne* 24 (1906): 379.

semitic agitation (in Kovno Province at Rossieny,<sup>70</sup> Kupiškis,<sup>71</sup> Ramygala,<sup>72</sup> Seda;<sup>73</sup> in Suvalki Province in the town of Suvalki itself, Mariampol', and Kalvarija).<sup>74</sup>

One known case involving Švėkšna (Kovno Province) differs considerably from the others. There, according to the local officer of gendarmes, not only did the peasants drive out local Russian officials, beat them, and even vow to kill them if they did not leave, but there also arose the chance of an anti-Jewish pogrom.<sup>75</sup> Thus, if the version of a

70 From Rossieny came the following information: "Agitation by the Black Hundreds among the Lithuanians has increased: fliers and brochures in Lithuanian have been spread encouraging a pogrom. There are two brochures, one *On the Talmud*, the other, *The Jews Wish To Swallow Us Up*": Letter from M. Levi to the Central Committee of the Union for Equal Rights for Jews in the Russian Empire, October 14, 1906, *RGIA*, f. 1525, op. 1, d. 242, l. 21. Practically identical information, albeit without specifying locations, was printed in the Union's newspaper: G.M. [?], "Antievreiskaia agitatsiia v cherte osedlosti," *Evreiskii izbiratel'* 1 (1906): 4. However, a few months later the same author denied information appearing in *Evreiskii izbiratel'* that relations between Jews and Gentiles in Rossieny were tense: Letter from M. Levi to the office of *Evreiskii izbiratel'*, *ibid.*, l. 7 (that publication appeared in "Nam pishut," *Evreiskii izbiratel'* 3 (1905): 8).

71 Secret report from governor of Kovno to governor general of Vil'na, July 4, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 13, l. 70–71. Although this memo mentions primarily Jewish anti-government activities in Kupiškis and then stresses that "challenging behavior by Jews" could result in a pogrom, there is no other information about this, and it is hard to believe that that local peasants would have wanted to "punish" the Jews for their anti-government activities.

72 "Juodašimtiški atsišaukimai [Black Hundreds' Proclamations]," *Lietuvos Ūkininkas* 35 (1906): 451.

73 Secret report from governor of Kovno to governor general of Vil'na, November 26, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 13, l. 294.

74 "Žydų skerdynių aidas Suvalkų gubernijoje [Reverberations of the Slaughter of Jews in Suvalki Province]," *Naujoji gadynė* 9 (1906): 140–141; "Juodašimčiai netyli [Black Hundreds Are Not Keeping Silence]," *ibid.*, 13 (1906): 206. This tension rose after the Belostok pogrom.

75 Secret reports from gendarme NCO in Gargždai to assistant chief of Kovno Province gendarmerie, gendarmerie officer in Gargždai, July 17, November 18, November 20, 1905; secret urgent report to the police officer in Švėkšna from the chief (?) of Kovno Province gendarmerie, December 23, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 3, b. 122, l. 41–42, 46–47, 50, 146. Since other sources of information about these events are lacking, the possibility cannot be discounted that the gendarmerie NCO who encountered the Lithuanian anti-government movement embellished his account and therefore added comments about the danger of a possible pogrom himself.

barely literate gendarme is to be believed, in Švėkšna the peasants were attempting to establish “Lithuanian order” by driving out the local Russian authorities and even “putting the Jews in their place.”

Thus some of the tension did turn into physical conflict. Certain incipient pogroms were halted in their first phase. Such cases, as we know, were associated with the recruitment of conscripts and took place at the end of 1905, that is, at the peak of the anti-Jewish pogroms. One such conflict broke out at Tel’shi on October 31, 1905, after three conscripts demanded free cigarettes from a Jewish shopkeeper. The conscripts not only did not receive any cigarettes but were also pushed out of the shop and beaten up by Jews who came to assist the tradesman. A mob of forty to fifty conscripts gathered and began to throw stones at the windows of Jewish houses. Their wrath was increased further when Jews began to shoot revolvers in self-defense. However, the Jews did manage to defend themselves, and order was finally restored by the arrival of policemen.<sup>76</sup> In Voronovo (Lida District, Vil’na Province) the police tried to halt an attempt by young peasants, mainly conscripts, to ransack Jewish homes, but the mob forced the release of five men that police had arrested. Later the Jews themselves took up resistance against the mob. Thus, in this case the pogrom was halted by the Jews.<sup>77</sup>

A conflict between a Christian customer and a Jewish tradesman at Gargždai on the Russian–German border on November 24, 1905, developed into a fight in the marketplace. After several young Jews fired revolvers, it spread to other parts of the town, as Christians began to smash the windows of Jewish houses in the market square and nearby streets. Border guards who came to suppress the conflict encountered disobedience from the local population and had to resort to force. The pogrom began around 3 p.m. and was subdued approximately three hours later.<sup>78</sup> The local populace’s resistance to the border guards in this case should not surprise us. At the end of 1905, the population of Gargždai rose up against the local authorities.<sup>79</sup> The

76 Secret report from governor of Kovno to governor general of Vil’na, October 21, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 13, l. 295.

77 Secret report from governor of Vil’na to governor general of Vil’na, December 13, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 23, l. 40.

78 Secret report from the gendarme in Gargždai to the chief of the separate gendarme corps, November 24, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 3, b. 122, l. 66–67.

79 Secret report from the gendarme in Gargždai to the chief of the separate gendarme corps, November 25, 1905, *ibid.*, l. 64–65.

prestige of the imperial authorities and confidence in their powers had waned considerably there, which created fertile soil for acts of collective violence. It is interesting that “Jewish” sources did not treat this incident as a pogrom: “On November 24 [1905], a fight broke out between local peasants and Jewish fishermen... the peasants smashed several dozen windows in houses near the market square, most of which belonged to Jews. There were no beatings or robberies, because the border guards in this border town beat back the mob.”<sup>80</sup> An incident at Dusetos on Easter Monday 1905 was the clearest case of a pogrom.

#### POGROM IN DUSETOS AT EASTER 1905

Many historical sources on the Dusetos (Novoaleksandrovsk [Zarasai] District, Kovno Province) pogrom concur in their details.<sup>81</sup> The majority of witness accounts say the direct cause of the pogrom was a fire that took place during the night of April 16–17 in Dusetos, during

80 Letter from M. Levi to Iu. Gessen, *RGIA*, f. 1525, op. 1, d. 242, l. 44. *Voskhod* also denied information that there was a pogrom in Gargždai: “Obzor evreiskoi zhizni v Rossii za 1905-i god,” *Voskhod* 1 (1906): 24. Fears of anti-Jewish pogroms arose again at the end of 1905: report from the gendarme in Gargždai to the policeman of Tel’shi District, December 28, 1905, *LVIA* f. 1227, ap. 3, b. 122, l. 151–152.

81 The most important information on this incident is to be found in the following sources: File “Po prosh. Chegisa i dr. obv. v pogrom v m. Dusiatakh,” *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 6519; secret report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, April 26, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 13, l. 36–38; resolution of the Kovno circuit court, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 23832, l. 93; Dustų Agaras [Antanas Macijauskas], “Dusetiškių kerštas [Dusetos People’s Revenge],” *Lietuvių laikraštis* 34 (1905): 485; “Za nedeliu,” *Voskhod* 17 (1905): 15–16; “Miastechko Dusiaty,” *Birzhevyje vedomosti* 103 (1905); Iu. Sh. [?], “Pogrom v Dusiatakh. (Ot nashego korrespondenta),” *Novosti* 106 (1905); “Sudebnyi protsess o pogrome v Dusiatakh,” *Severo-zapadnyi golos* 239 (1906); Khoronzhitski, “Iber idishe pogromen”; Kruss-Glussak and Blacher, “Fun undzer shtetl,” 336–345; Weiss-Slep, ed., *Ayara Hayeta B’Lita*, 65–67. In addition to sources providing detailed information about the pogrom, there are less important contemporary newspaper articles that provide concise accounts: “Za nedeliu,” *Voskhod* 16 (1905): 27; *Pamiatnaia knizhka Kovenskoi gubernii na 1906 god*, 11; “Evreiskaia zhizn’,” *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni* 16 (1905): 27; *Ha-zman* 85 (1905). For more details on this pogrom, see Staliūnas, “Dusetos,” 495–514.



which Christian houses and outbuildings suffered most.<sup>82</sup> Christian inhabitants of Dusetos suspected that the blaze was caused by arson and that Jews were to blame. Fires were very common in small towns in Lithuania during the nineteenth century.<sup>83</sup> Dusetos was no exception. Arson was often a means of settling personal accounts in Dusetos, too.<sup>84</sup> However, there were additional reasons why Jews were blamed.<sup>85</sup> Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, the idea that arson was a common way for Jews to settle accounts and also deal with competitors had taken deep root in Lithuanian Judeophobic tradition.<sup>86</sup> Probably the most notorious propagator of antisemitic sentiments among Lithuanians in this period was the newspaper *Nedėldienio skaitymas* (Reading for the Day of Rest), which claimed that the Jews in Dusetos had set the fire in order to ruin their Christian rivals.<sup>87</sup> Thus the fact that Christian houses suffered most from the blaze, as well as

82 According to data from the local authorities, twelve dwelling houses burned along with eighteen outbuildings: Report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, April 26, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 13, l. 37. *Lietuvių laikraštis* wrote that fourteen farmers suffered, six of whom were "left without a roof over their heads": Artojelis [Antanas Jameikis], "Iš Dusetų [From Dusetos]," *Lietuvių laikraštis* 22 (1905): 298–299. The Hebrew newspaper *Ha-tsfirah* claimed that both Christian and Jewish houses suffered: M. Vaitis, "Ha-pra'ot be-dusiat [The Pogrom in Dusiat]," *Ha-tsfirah* 82 (1905).

83 See also Chapter Three.

84 Several cases survive that were brought against Dusetos arsonists: See file "Dusiatskago volostnogo suda Novoaleksandrovsakago uezda, Kovenskoi gub. Po obv. Krest. Ivana Antonova Palenisa (po 95 st. ust. o nakaz.) v podzhoge bani," *KAA*, f. I-92, ap. 1, b. 1; and file "Po obvineniiu Yustiny Baranovskoi (po 91 st. Ust. o nakaz.) v podzhoge khoziaistvennykh postroek," *KAA*, f. I-92, ap. 1, b. 10.

85 One convicted participant in the pogrom and the relatives of other convicts asserted that the Novoaleksandrovsk First District Court prosecutor had opened an arson case against three Jews who had fled abroad: the appeals of Albinas Čegys (October 1, 1906) and kinsmen of the convicts (December 19, 1906), *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 6519, l. 2, 68. *Lietuvių laikraštis* mentioned that one townsman had heard Jews talking among themselves about two Jewish arsonists: Dustų Agaras [A. Macijauskas], "Dusetiškių kerštas," 485.

86 J.A. Kalnėnas, "Veiverei (Suvalkų red.)," *Aušra* 7–8 (1885): 233; V.K. [Vincas Kudirką], "Apie pardavinyčias [On Shops]," *Ūkininkas* 2 (1895): 10; Venclauskas, "Moderniojo lietuviško antisemitizmo genezė," 109. The Lithuanian writer and public activist Juozas Tumas (Vaižgantas) also mentions arson as a Jewish method of exacting revenge in his memoirs: Vaižgantas, *Raštai*, 131.

87 Kun. L. Sp. [kun. Leonas Špokevičius], "Dusetos," *Nedėldienio skaitymas* 42 (1906): 6.

the stereotypes fostered by Lithuanian Judeophobic tradition, became the most important stimulus for the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence.

Angry local Christians demanded that the Jews take an oath in synagogue that they were innocent of starting the fire and that they would tell the Christians if they knew who the guilty party was. The story of the Jewish oath and its later discounting by the Christians also reflected the context of Jewish–Christian relations. The religious nature of most Jews was very evident even to Christian society, and thus Christians believed that an oath given in synagogue would provide extra assurance for believing Jewish claims. However, Judeophobic tradition said that Jewish oaths were not to be trusted. In Western Europe, Christians traditionally did not trust Jewish oaths in private or public matters. This mistrust was reflected in the Romanov Empire after the partitions of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth; there were lengthy discussions of whether Jews could give evidence in courts where Christians were also involved.<sup>88</sup> Both Polish and Lithuanian antisemitic traditions alleged that Judaism allowed its followers to give false witness or false oaths to Christians.<sup>89</sup> Thus it comes as no surprise that the oath the Jews gave did not lessen the tensions in Dusetos. At the same time it shows that both sides, Jewish and Lithuanian alike, viewed ethnic hierarchy in similar ways, at least at that point: the Lithuanians did not appeal to the authorities to decide one way or another which was the guilty party. Instead, local peasants thought they had the right to tell the representatives of another group (the Jews) what they had to do (i.e., swear an oath in synagogue). The Jews obeyed this *diktat*, thus acknowledging on a certain level that the peasants were the stronger group.

There were also cases of smaller domestic disputes that embroiled both local Jews and Christians in Dusetos.<sup>90</sup> It is likely that anti-Jewish sentiment had increased at the end of 1904 throughout Novo-

88 Klier, *Rossiiia sobiratel' svoikh evreev*, 106, 252–253. In 1863 the censor of the Jewish press, Barats, was compelled to draft a long explanatory text denying the antisemitic conviction that Judaism allows Jews to lie to Christians and put snitches to death. Barats text presented in October 1863, *YIVO*, RG 80, file no. 726, folio no. 83, l. 61952–61956.

89 Grušeckis, *Talmudas žydy*, 31–33; Pranaitis, *Krikščionis žydy Talmude*, 79–80; “Bylos atbalsiai [Repercussions from Lawsuit],” *Šaltinis* 42 (1913): 671.

90 For more details on such cases in Dusetos and rising anti-Jewish sentiments in the mid-nineteenth century, see Staliūnas, “Dusetos,” 499–500.

aleksandrovsk (Zarasai) District after conscripts were taken into the tsar's army. Granted, these most likely did not become more serious pogroms. This conclusion is based on local Jews' expression of gratitude to the governor of Kovno at the end of 1904 because the latter had taken measures to ensure that, during conscript recruitment in the district, there were no attacks on Jews.<sup>91</sup>

At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, elements of economic nationalism contributed to the ethno-confessional tensions that had existed for many years. From the second half of the nineteenth century, the number of peasants with supplementary funds and ambitions to invest in trades other than just agriculture increased. Reflections of such economic rivalry appeared in Dusetos as well.<sup>92</sup> During the pogrom the peasants accused the Jews of hindering them from taking up commercial activities. The relatives of prosecuted pogrom participants explicitly mentioned such economic motivation: "Being dependant economically on local traders, who were all, with almost no exceptions, Jews, and suffering constant offense from these Jews, who were stronger than them, and sensing their arrogant attitude towards the peasants, who were their closest neighbors, and finally, believing that the several fires that had taken place in the locality were the work of their Jewish oppressors, who desired revenge on one peasant or another, the local inhabitants became angry at them."<sup>93</sup> Meanwhile, it is hard to find elements of political nationalism in this incident. Admittedly, the 1905 national revolution had also affected Dusetos. In May there were demands for all court verdicts to be proclaimed in Lithuanian.<sup>94</sup> At the end of the year, local Lithuanian authorities were elected.<sup>95</sup> Flyers were posted encouraging people to oppose the influence of Poland and fight for an independent

91 "Evreiskaia zhizn'," *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni* 1 (1905): 31.

92 "Iš Dusetų [From Dusetos]," *Vilniaus žinios* 69 (1905).

93 Appeal from relatives of the convicts, December 19, 1906, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 6519, l. 2, 68.

94 "Dusetos," *Vilniaus žinios* 122 (1905).

95 A local Russian scribe wrote that only the army could maintain order, and he was unlikely to remain alive: Reports from the Dusetos scribe to the governor of Kovno, December 15 and 18, 1905, *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 23832, l. 3, 7-7a. A similar situation existed throughout the Novoaleksandrovsk District. See file "Raport nachal'nika Vostochnago letuchego otriada o politicheskom polozenii v Novoaleksandrovskom uezde," *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 25854.

Lithuania, and so on.<sup>96</sup> The target of this political battle was Russia and Russians, and Poland and the Poles. It seems that Lithuanian activists around Dusetos had no complaints against Jews. Neither the verbal conflicts that took place on the eve of the pogrom nor the known evidence of witnesses nor the symbols adopted by those involved in the violence indicate any political subtext to the attack.

Alongside the general revolutionary chaos that took over most areas of Lithuania, the situation in Dusetos was complicated by the fact that, according to the Lithuanian press, there had been poor flax harvests, the main source of peasant income, for three years in a row.<sup>97</sup>

The timing of the pogrom, at Easter, prompts the question of whether the reason for the excesses was religious too.<sup>98</sup> This question is all the more relevant since Dusetos Jewish oral tradition tells the highly implausible story of a Jewish woman, Rachel-Leah Poritz, who dressed up as a Christian before the pogrom and attended church, where she heard the priest urging his congregation to attack the Jews.<sup>99</sup> In one tale of this excess, we read that the Torah scroll was also attacked in the Baron house; apparently it was torn to shreds. Indeed, religious Judeophobia was unquestionably a foundation on which the ideological structure of Lithuanian Antisemitism was built. Nevertheless, information about the roots of the violence and the actions of the attackers does not show that there was any desire to abuse Jewish religious sentiments (despite the destruction of the Torah scroll, which is not confirmed by any other sources and may have been collateral damage). The synagogue was not touched.<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, Easter, like other Christian feasts, created conditions that favored acts of violence, as huge crowds of people gathered at such

96 Report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, November 12, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 74, l. 7.

97 L.S. [Leonas Špokevičius?], "Iš Dusetų."

98 It should be noted that Easter was the time that anti-Jewish pogroms most often arose in the Russian Empire: Klier, "Christians and Jews," 159; Judge, *Easter in Kishinev*.

99 Weiss-Slep, ed., *Ayara Hayeta B'Lita*, 65–67.

100 Granted, the aforementioned correspondent of the St. Petersburg newspaper *Novosti* asserted that this happened because after the pogrom participants reached the synagogue, the church bells rang out and the violence ended: Yu. Sh. [?], "Pogrom v Dusiatakh. (Ot nashego korrespondenta)," *Novosti* 106 (1905).

times. Similar conditions could arise in small towns only on market day or during fairs (which sometimes coincided with religious feast days).

After examining what triggered the pogrom, we can now turn our attention to the course of violence. According to data from the official investigation, on Easter Day, April 18, a few local Christians gathered at Osip (Juozapas) Vienažindis's house and, blaming the Jews for arson, decided to take revenge by starting a pogrom. As rumors of their plans spread, several Jews attempted to talk those involved out of their plot, but to no avail. The Jews were reminded that there had just been conflagrations and attempts to stop peasants from setting up in trade and so on. To protect themselves, the Jews closed their shops and went into hiding. The pogrom began immediately after prayers between 1 and 2 p.m. and lasted for several hours. Sources differ considerably on the number of pogrom participants. According to the official version, as many as 1,000 people may have taken part, whereas the well-informed *Novosti* correspondent mentions a group of between fifty and sixty persons. It may be that after services, the group indeed numbered as many as 1,000 but that only some of them took part in the incident, damaging Jewish property or causing bodily harm. The numbers provided by the aforementioned newspaper may be close to the truth, especially given that a similar number of people (sixty-three) were actually prosecuted.

Most accounts stress that the main object of the pogrom was Jewish property. According to the official account, in Jewish houses, shops and workshops "window frames and doors were smashed, in dwellings furniture was smashed, plates and cups broken, clothes destroyed; some bedding, knickknacks, tobacco, haberdashery, textile items, and other goods were torn to pieces, slashed, soiled, and tossed out into the street, and some were piled up on the ground inside the shops." In principle this fits the logic of the pogrom: the story Christians gave in Dusetos was that the Jews were exploiting them and, fearing competition, were burning their houses. Thus the punishment should fit the crime: Jewish property was destroyed in order to restore economic "balance." According to the official version, total Jewish losses during the pogrom amounted to 76,357 rubles, quite a sizable figure for those times. Several graphic accounts of the Dusetos post-pogrom survive, with stolen Jewish property spread all over the town. However, the Jews of Dusetos fired back with revolvers, which outraged the pogrom mob. Only after peasants encountered opposition, especially gunfire,

did the pogrom participants turn their wrath against the Jews themselves. As *Lietuvių laikraštis* (*Lithuanian Newspaper*) wrote, shooting by the Jews “made the criminals even more angry.”<sup>101</sup> This transition from the destruction of Jewish property to bodily harm during pogroms in the Russian Empire usually happened when Jews broke the established “rules of the game” and began to use firearms.<sup>102</sup> Since most of the shooting came from the house of Abram Baron, the greatest drama of the incident also took place there, as some peasants climbed ladders up to the first floor, from where the shots were coming, and pushed toward two of the householder’s sons, Leib and Yitzchak, who were there, killing the latter with an axe.<sup>103</sup> Several other Jews were also wounded.

There are several accounts of the end of the pogrom. The least credible one became fixed in the memory of local Jews. According to this, the arrival of the police halted the excess. This can be dismissed, since several witnesses, including the official report, record how police and other officials, the district doctor, and fifteen Cossacks arrived only at 4 a.m. the next day.<sup>104</sup> On the day of the pogrom, the local police superintendent (*uriadnik*) attempted to halt the anti-Jewish excesses, but he himself was beaten up. There are several accounts of attempts by the local parish priest to halt the pogrom. However, more credible is another version published by *Lietuvių laikraštis*, which asserted that after the murder of Yitzchak Baron, “the terrified avengers fled as quickly as possible from the town and drove out other people, who returned home in droves out of fear.”<sup>105</sup> A similar version of the end

101 Dustų Agaras [Antanas Macijauskas], “Dusetiškių kerštas,” 485.

102 Klier, “Christians and Jews,” 166.

103 Report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, April 26, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 13, l. 37. *Birzhevyje vedomosti* published information claiming that Yitzchak was decapitated and his ribs smashed and that another corpse was defiled after that: “Miastechko Dusiati,” *Birzhevyje vedomosti* 103 (1905). This is obviously exaggerated. The Jewish press also wrote about such cruelty: *Ha-zman* 87 (1905). Also inaccurate is information about two pogrom murder victims: “Za nedeliu,” *Voskhod* 16 (1905): 27. Yitzchak Baron’s grave still lies in Dusetos Jewish Cemetery.

104 Report from Kovno governor to Vil’na governor general, April 26, 1905, *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 13, l. 36; Dustų Agaras [Antanas Macijauskas], “Dusetiškių kerštas,” 486. *Ha-tsfirah* also reported that the Cossacks arrived after the pogrom ended: M. Vaitis, “Ha-pra’ot be-dusiat.”

105 Dustų Agaras [A. Macijauskas], “Dusetiškių kerštas,” 485–486.

of the pogrom is recorded in the official accusation,<sup>106</sup> and most interestingly, the very same version is engraved on Baron's tombstone. It says that the victim "defended our town, since [he] sacrificed his blood for the sake of the community on the day when enemy took the town Dusiat[,] and with his blood appeased the Plague." All these sources indicate that the pogrom participants most probably had no intention of killing Jews.<sup>107</sup>

As we have seen in the case of the Dusetos pogrom, a spontaneous self-defense triggered an escalation of violence. At the same time, an effort of organized self-defense was visible in major cities of Lithuania, as well as other parts of the Russian Empire.

#### THE JEWISH SELF-DEFENSE FACTOR

As is well known, Jews began to organize self-defense groups at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>108</sup> Sometimes the beginning of this practice is dated to 1902,<sup>109</sup> but there is little doubt that the greatest advance came in the following year, after the Easter Day pogrom in Kishinev.<sup>110</sup> Both the Bund and Poale-Zion claimed to have started the creation of self-defense groups.<sup>111</sup>

As several of the cases cited in this chapter show, on several occasions organized Jewish resistance halted an incipient pogrom in smaller Lithuanian towns (such as Tel'shi and Voronovo).

The most evidence of the organization of self-defense groups comes from Vil'na. Here a joint self-defense committee was formed in

106 Copy of conviction, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 6519, l. 41.

107 The end of the physical violence and the arrival of official representatives in Dusetos did not halt the ethnic tension. For more on the situation in Dusetos in the aftermath of the pogrom, see Staliūnas, "Dusetos," 504–506.

108 A separate topic could be the attitude of different groups within Jewish communities towards armed self-defense units. Conservative groups were as a rule opposed to such methods. The governor of Vil'na, Viktor Val', noted in his memoirs that rabbis and some other influential figures within the Jewish community acknowledged to him that they had no influence on the youth (obviously referring to revolutionary groups): Viktor Val', Vil'na (memoirs), *RGIA*, f. 916, op. 1, d. 13, l. 23.

109 Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement*, 232–233.

110 Cahan, "Tsu der geshikhte," 16.

111 Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement*, 234.

1905 that included representatives of the Polish Socialist Party [Polska Partia Socjalistyczna; PPS] as well as members of Jewish parties.<sup>112</sup> There are several (often contradictory) sources stating how many people took part in self-defense groups. Information from the non-Jewish press states that all Jewish males between the ages of seventeen and sixty years were compelled to take part in Jewish self-defense organizations, and those who refused were to pay a fine.<sup>113</sup> This is clearly exaggerated. Information collected by the Bund at the beginning of 1906 mentioning seventy-five members of a self-defense unit also fails to provide a full picture of the situation, especially since, according to reports by the Vil'na Bund, other left-wing parties in the city also organized their own units, as did Gentiles such as the Lithuanian Social Democrats.<sup>114</sup> Thus the permanent self-defense groups may have had as many as several hundred members, but according to historiography, as the danger of a pogrom arose, these could be joined by reserve members, too. Then the total number of self-defense volunteers in Vil'na may have reached 1,000.<sup>115</sup>

The city was divided into districts, each with its own coordinating center. Self-defense volunteers were armed with both cold weapons and firearms.<sup>116</sup> Reports were made of self-defense actions halting an incipient pogrom in the Užupis district of Vil'na.<sup>117</sup> In Vil'na Jewish self-defense volunteers took over some police functions, and there

112 Szabad, *Oytobiografie*, 66; Rafes, *Doctor Tsemakh Shabad*, 24; the excerpt from Szabad's autobiography was re-published in Shalit, ed., *Oyf di hurves*, 930–938.

113 "Kronika krajowa. Wilno. Samooborona," *Kurjer Litewski* 53 (1905); "Vilniuje [in Vil'na]," *Vilniaus žinos* 259 (1905).

114 Dubnov, *Kniga zhizni*, 291–292; information about Bund self-defense units, YIVO, RG 1400, MG–2 Box 36, Folder 428, pages unnumbered. Information collected at that time showed that in the Bund self-defense divisions in Kovno there were thirty permanent members, in Vilkaviškis twenty-five, and in Ponevezh none, but they kept forty revolvers and could organize self-defense if the need arose. Cahan provides evidence that there were 300 members of the Bund unit in Vil'na, but he does not show where he got these data from: Cahan, "Tsu der geshikhte," 18.

115 Of course, there are no exact data. A. Cahan believes that the ratio of members and reservists in the Bund's permanent self-defense units was 1:3 (Cahan, "Tsu der geshikhte," 18).

116 Hirschbayn, *In gang fun leben*, 88.

117 "Dnevnik," *Novaia zaria* 7 (1905); "Vilniuje [In Vil'na]," *Vilniaus žinios* 258 (1905).



were cases in which self-defense patrols stopped and questioned passers-by. As the official report states,

In Vil'na so-called "Jewish Self-Defense" formed under the leadership of the chiefs of the revolutionary parties. Throughout November numerous self-defense units, consisting mostly of Jewish youths armed with revolvers and lead pipes, were masters of the city, inducing fear and panic among the civilian population, shooting in the streets, detaining passers-by on foot and in vehicles and taking them to the unit's special offices to check their identity; these offices were located in, among other places, the City Administration, where evidently the self-defense units enjoyed [official] sympathy... The unbridled activities of the self-defense volunteers, unfortunately, did not meet the necessary rebuff from the administration: police stations were closed in the city temporarily, and army patrols were canceled.<sup>118</sup>

The press and other sources described the organization of Jewish self-defense units in Shavli (where 300 volunteers joined), Augustovo, and Kovno.<sup>119</sup> Thus, there is no doubt that Jewish self-defense units often managed to neutralize small groups intent on robbing Jewish property and causing violence, both in large cities such as Vil'na and in smaller towns. Moreover, the presence of self-defense organizations also acted as a deterrent, discouraging Judeophobes from even beginning violence.<sup>120</sup>

However, it is possible that Jewish self-defense increased interethnic tension even further. Thus well-organized Jewish self-defense units in Vil'na, especially after they acted as an urban patrol force in the city at the end of 1905, aroused the ire not only of the local authorities but

118 Annual report for Vil'na Province, 1906, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1907 m., b. 31, l. 3.

119 V. Levin, "Lithuanians in the Jewish Politics," 109; *Ha-tzfirah* 250 (1905): 3; secret report from the director of the Police Department to the chief of gendarmes in Suvalki and Seiny Districts, August 18, 1906, *LVIA*, f. 1006, ap. 1, b. 107, l. 186; "Avgustovo," *Poslednie izvestiia* 238 (1905): 5; "Kovne," *Di arbaytershtime* (September 1905): 28–29; "Kovno," *Poslednie izvestiia* 244 (1905): 1–2.

120 Such a possibility was expressed, although in a cautious way, in S. Dubnov's memoirs: Dubnov, *Kniga zhizni*, 292.

also of certain conservative members of the local Catholic community.<sup>121</sup> This anger did not develop into a pogrom, but antipathy towards all Jews undoubtedly increased. On the other hand, the use of firearms in self-defense, as the case of the Dusetos pogrom shows, could enrage pogrom participants, which led to increased violence.<sup>122</sup>

Thus although the existence of Jewish self-defense mechanisms in certain situations could be an important factor in preventing or curtailing pogroms, it certainly cannot be the sole or even a major explanation of why, during the 1905 Revolution in Lithuania, there were so few pogroms. After all, Jewish self-defense units existed in southern Russian cities where huge pogroms took place.<sup>123</sup>

Another strategy proposed by some Jewish political groups, primarily liberals, was to fight Antisemitism on a day-to-day basis. Such a program was prepared in 1907 by the Jewish People's Group and foresaw a wide range of activities (publication of texts denouncing antisemitic activities; cooperation with Belarusian, Lithuanian, and Polish newspapers; organization of public lectures; fundraising; monitoring the situation; etc.),<sup>124</sup> but there is no information on whether this program was put into practice.

121 Annual report for Vil'na Province, 1906, *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1907 m., b. 31, l. 3; "Dnevnik," *Novaia zaria* 48 (1905); *Gosudarstvennaia Duma*, 1729–1730; Weeks, "The 1905 Revolution," 230–231.

122 According to figures from Shlomo Lambroza, the number of pogrom victims was higher when self-defense was organized. Knowing that self-defense volunteers were ready to use firearms, *pogromshchiki* also armed themselves appropriately, and all this increased the number of dead and wounded: Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement*, 149, 256–257, 260, 308.

123 Statistics for members of the Bund's self-defense units are presented in S. Lambroza's dissertation: Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement*, 237. Stefan Wiese even indicates that one of the main reasons for the pogrom in Zhitomir in 1905 was exactly the formation of Jewish military units and the aim of the revolutionaries to use them for revolutionary ends, that is, to destabilize the status quo. Self-defense was thus a matter of only secondary importance. The formation of these units and their provocative behavior increased the fear of local Christians and encouraged them "to show the Jews their proper place": Wiese, *Jewish Self-Defense*.

124 Jewish People's Group Resolution, 1907, *CAHJP*, HMF 80; Levin, "Preventing Pogroms," 104.

## LOCAL AUTHORITY ACTIONS

It has already been said that the Bund's party press blamed local authorities at various levels for encouraging pogroms in Lithuania. Such accusations fit the general explanation that the Bund and many other left-wing parties gave for pogroms within the empire: that the authorities organized them, first, to direct the discontent of the peasantry and urban populace away from the authorities and onto the Jews, and second, to split the Jewish community and compel it to distance itself from Jewish "democrats" and even hand them over to the authorities.<sup>125</sup> It is difficult, and sometimes impossible, to corroborate such claims, especially in cases where pogroms did not in fact take place. In certain cases, such as the Dusetos pogrom mentioned above, when we have various sources and can view an incident from different perspectives, we may assert that in this specific case the pogrom erupted without intervention from the authorities. What local police in Dusetos can be accused of is inaction; reinforcements were requested only in the evening after the incident had already ended. Still, there are grounds for suspicion that in some cases, lower-ranking policemen or military officers indeed tried to inspire pogroms. A particularly likely period for an increase in such sentiments and efforts was the end of 1905, after the October 17 Manifesto and the active participation of a considerable number of Jews, primarily young people, in revolutionary activities, especially when there is other evidence of Judeophobic sentiment among military officers.<sup>126</sup>

It is worth noting the conflict that arose in Kovno between the governor and the commandant of the Kovno Fortress. The latter blamed the Jewish community for revolutionary incidents in Kovno ("mobs of killers formed from within the Jewish community, which attacked unarmed police officers"), and at the end of December 1905 the

125 M.V. [?], "Pogroms and Self-defense" (a historical sketch) (manuscript), *YIVO*, RG 1400, MG-2 Box 36, Folder 428, pages unnumbered.

126 The aforementioned Bishop von der Ropp asserted that a certain army general explained the tension rising in Vil'na at the end of 1905 as "a union of Slavs against the Jews" and that the army was prepared to shoot the Jews: *Gosudarstvennaia Duma*, 1730. Clearly Ropp's words must also be assessed with caution, because he was an enemy of the tsar's regime and so had a clear interest in demeaning the army's authority.

governor received local Jewish representatives, who expressed gratitude to Verevkin: "You did not take the path of the reactionaries, who sought the preservation of the regime, which the supreme authorities recognized to be unsuitable, by beating intellectuals and spilling blood." The commandant of the Kovno Fortress treated these words as an attack on army units, which had maintained order in the city.<sup>127</sup> This incident shows once more that there are no grounds for accusing Governor Verevkin of Kovno of attempting to initiate pogroms.

Fewer doubts arise concerning the intentions of higher-ranking local officials. There is no available evidence that they inspired anti-Jewish violence or failed to take measures to subdue pogroms. As soon as higher-ranking local officials obtained information about ethnic tension and the possibility that a pogrom might erupt, then, as in earlier periods, they immediately sent police or army reinforcements to the relevant location.<sup>128</sup> There were also attempts to eliminate circumstances that might provoke ethnic conflict. Following the June 1906 Belostok pogrom, the central authorities issued instructions for all processions, primarily those religious in nature, during which crowds of people typically gathered, to be avoided. However, as can be seen from the case of Vil'na in June 1906 discussed above, and Jewish unwillingness to see a Catholic procession forbidden, just such attempts to ban religious processions had the potential to increase antisemitic sentiment—at least representatives of Vil'na Jewry thought so.

127 File "Po voprosu o prekrashchenii v Kovenskoi kreposti bezporiadkov," *LVIA*, f. 378, bs, 1905 m., b. 24; "Mestnaia khronika," *Kovenskii telegraf* 339 (1905); "Po kraiu. Kovna," *Vilenskii vestnik* 745 (1905).

128 Information on this kind of government activity is in the following files: "Perepiska o preduprezhdenii pogromov," *GARF*, f. 102, dp-oo, 1906 g., 2 delo-proizvodstvo, d. 550; "O bezporiadkakh sredi sel'skago naseleniia Kovenskoi gubernii i o sootvetstvuiushchikh priniatykh merakh," *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 13; "Pomoshchnika nachal'nika Kovenskogo gubernskogo zhandarmskogo upravleniia na pogranichnom punkte v m.[iastechke] Gorgzhdakh," *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 3, b. 122. This was especially true since local officials had received instructions in earlier years as well on how to act when the danger of pogroms arose. Thus, after the Gomel' pogrom of 1903, gendarmes in Kovno Province received instructions to observe public sentiments closely in order to avoid incidents like the one in Gomel': circular from the chief of staff of the gendarmerie of Kovno Province, September 3, 1903, *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 3, b. 103, l. 87.

Given the nature of local nationalisms, the local authorities—especially in areas of the Northwestern Region dominated by Lithuanians—do not seem likely suspects in arranging pogroms.

#### ETHNIC RELATIONS IN LITHUANIA 1905–1907

As noted already, many pogroms that took place in the Russian Empire during the 1905 Revolution were initiated by right-wing Russian groups seeking to “teach the Jews a lesson” for their participation in the revolutionary movement. Meanwhile, in Lithuania there were not many ethnic Russians. However, the confessional situation was no less important than the ethnic composition of the population. As mentioned above, in the three provinces examined here, an absolute majority of the populace was Catholic. Thus right-wing Russian parties had a limited supply of potential supporters. The Russian Borderland Union managed to draw many Orthodox peasants into its ranks in Minsk Province, but it had less of a following in Vil’na and Kovno Provinces. The Union of the Russian People was equally ineffective in setting up a few small branches in the latter two provinces.<sup>129</sup> These organizations, which most often defended the old regime, simply had no chance of recruiting among Poles and Lithuanians.<sup>130</sup> On some occasions these two national groups could also be targets for defenders of the *ancien regime*. In 1905 voices could be heard among Russians calling for “a pogrom against Catholics like the ones against Jews.”<sup>131</sup>

However, as the examples of ethnic tension and pogroms in Lithuania during the 1905 Revolution outlined in this study show, not only conservative Russian nationalism but also other factors could generate antipathy towards the Jews. Even so, we might assume that there was less antipathy to Jews in Lithuania than in certain other parts of the empire, where many pogroms took place with many casualties. Of

129 Rawson, *Russian Rightists*, 252, note 55. For more on Antisemitism among the Russian Rightists, see Podbolotov, “True-Russians,” 191–220. The aforementioned J. Sproģis noted in his diary that at the founding meeting of the rightist Russian organization in Vil’na, only twenty-one people showed up: Sproģis diary, entry of November 18, 1905, *LVVA*, f. 2320, 1 apr., l. 7, lp. 89.

130 Shmarya Levin, elected from Vil’na to the First Russian Duma, also notes this: Levin, *The Arena*, 286.

131 Werth, “Trudnyi put’,” 453.

course, it is a challenge to measure and compare cases of ethnic tension. The number of pogroms and their victims is an important criterion here. However, this cannot be the only measure, since on occasion local officials or clergymen prevented ethnic conflict from turning into a full-fledged pogrom. An especially important source in this case is contemporary records comparing situations in various regions. We have at least one such source to illustrate this thesis.

From 1902 Aleksei Kharuzin was in charge of the chancery of the governor general of Vil'na. In 1904 he was transferred to Kishinev, where he was governor of Bessarabia until 1908. In a letter to Interior Minister Prince Petr Sviatopolk-Mirskii, former governor general of Vil'na, he said the situation in his new posting was "a completely different phenomenon from that in the Northwestern Region; the Jews are different here too, as is the main mass of the population, which comprises Moldavians and Russians." In Kishinev the likelihood of a pogrom was very high, citizens contemplated pogroms every day, and "the essence lies not in accidental events but in a deeply rooted antagonism between the Christian and Jewish parts of the city's population, the grounds for which lie in economic interests."<sup>132</sup>

Given the situation in Lithuanian towns, there was not much reason for economic antagonism. In terms of industrialization, Lithuania was one of the most backward parts of the empire. The first two factories were built in Vil'na only in 1864. The available data show that Catholics, Orthodox, and Jews worked in different factories (Catholics worked on leather, metal, and bricks; Orthodox often worked in railway engine repair yards; the Jews worked in tobacco factories).<sup>133</sup> In other Lithuanian provinces, industry and hence the number of workers also grew very slowly. Between 1890 and 1910, the number of industrial workers in Kovno Province rose from 3,905 to 10,038. There were 569 industrial workers in Suvalki Province in 1876 and 1,907 in 1910.<sup>134</sup> Because artisan-type industry requiring certain skills dominated in Lithuanian towns, craftsmen from small towns had an easier

132 Letter from A. Kharuzin to P. Sviatopolk-Mirskii, December 19 [?], 1904, *GARF*, f. 1729, op. 1, d. 1576, l. 136. Granted, we should bear in mind that Kharuzin left Vil'na before the Revolution began, when ethnic tension increased in Lithuania too, and a huge pogrom erupted in Kishinev in 1903.

133 Jurginis et al., *Vilniaus miesto istorija*, 304.

134 Truska, "Emigracija iš Lietuvos," 73.

time than peasants finding work there.<sup>135</sup> Thus there was less chance of direct competition between Jews and Gentiles for jobs.

Clearly, economic rivalry did exist in towns when some of the wealthier peasants began to engage in trade and other businesses, and as the Dusetos and Vieksniai cases show, this could become one of the reasons for a pogrom. However, as has been noted, ethnic tension in small towns or villages did not escalate into large-scale anti-Jewish violence.

Meanwhile, there were not many political reasons for anti-Jewish violence to spread in the Polish and Lithuanian society of the Northwestern Region during the revolution.

As noted earlier, conservative Polish circles objected to the participation of Jews in revolutionary events, including the actions of self-defense units in Vil'na.<sup>136</sup> Bishop von der Ropp did little to hide his Antisemitism. However, the same von der Ropp joined Jewish representatives, including rabbis, at the end of 1905 in a visit to the governor general asking for all measures to be taken to prevent a pogrom.<sup>137</sup> The clearest political disagreements between political groups representing Poles and Jews became apparent during elections to the Russian Duma, beginning in 1906. In general, Jews in Vil'na, Kovno, and Suvalki Provinces most often formed a bloc with Lithuanians against Poles. Polish political leaders were particularly upset about losing to the Jews in elections to the Russian Duma in the Vil'na constituency in the elections to the First Russian Duma. The election of candidates in the city of Vil'na did not pass without conflicts between Poles and Lithuanians as well.<sup>138</sup> However, Antisemitism was still not as strong in Polish nationalism during the revolution<sup>139</sup> as it would become after the disturbances were suppressed and especially after 1912.

One of the main features of this period in Lithuania was the anti-imperial and, in part, even anti-Russian Lithuanian movement. Peasant resolutions passed in various parts of Lithuania demanded autonomy

135 Jurginis et al., *Vilniaus miesto istorija*, 304; Merkys, *Razvitie promyshlennosti*, 425.

136 Weeks, "Political and National Survival," 361.

137 Szabad, *Oytobiyografie*, 65.

138 For more on this, see Staliūnas, "Collaboration of Lithuanians and Jews," 45–75.

139 There are contemporary records affirming that the Polish view of Jews in Vil'na in 1905 was "favorable": Telegram from Kotovich to S. Vitte, October 22, 1905, YIVO, RG 80 (Elias Tcherikover Archives), File no. 967, p. 74526.

for Lithuania, the chance to study in the Lithuanian language, the abolition of ethno-confessional discrimination, and social and economic reforms. At the same time, there was a mass expulsion of Russian officials and teachers and the appointment of Lithuanians in their place.<sup>140</sup> Most commonly, official texts report that on more than one occasion, the intention was to drive out all Russians, not just Russian officials, and sometimes they were threatened with retaliation; physical conflict was not unknown.<sup>141</sup> Old Believers became one target of Lithuanian aggression.<sup>142</sup> Sometimes the anti-Russian movement took on anti-Jewish features; that is, both Russians and Jews came under

140 Russian officials were driven out in large numbers in Lithuania in 1905 and replaced by Lithuanian self-administration (in eighty-two out of 145 in local districts of Kovno Province; thirty-three out of eighty in the Lithuanian local administrations in districts of Suvalki Province; and slightly fewer in the Svientsiany, Troki, and Vil'na Districts of Vil'na Province—ten out of fifty-five *volost'*); in state primary schools Russian teachers were replaced by local ones, and instruction in Lithuanian was introduced (such changes were made in approximately half of the schools in Suvalki Province (forty-seven schools) and Kovno Province (132 schools). Much evidence of this type is to be found in cases of the first inventory of LVIA, f. 1227, and Tyla, *1905 metų revoliucija*, 109; Jučas et al., *Lietuvos istorija*, 169; "Po kraiu. Ponevezh," *Vilenskii vestnik* 775 (1905); copy of a secret report from the NCO of gendarmes in Gargždai, December 8, 1905, to the gendarmes' officer in Gargždai, LVIA, f. 1227, ap. 3, b. 122, l. 103.

141 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, November 18, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, ps. 1905 m., b. 74, l. 22–23 (Linkuva Rural District, Ponevezh District: the assistant district police superintendent reported that rumors were spreading there of "the expulsion of all Russians." The local gendarme had heard such slogans in a mob as "away with the Russians, death to the Russians, away with the police, down with the government." The head of the post and telegraph office gave evidence that people had shouted, "if the Russian officials do not leave of their own free will, we will kill them and slit their throats"); "Nash krai. Kovna," *Novaia zaria* 37 (1905); "Po kraiu. Kovna," *Vilenskii vestnik* 762 (1905) (here it was even written that an Old Believer family had been killed because they refused to leave); telegram from the gendarme at Gargždai, November 26, 1905, to the colonel of gendarmes in Kovno, LVIA, f. 1227, ap. 3, b. 122, l. 70 (on the situation in Gargždai). A 1907–1908 poll of Russian colonists in Kovno Province recorded several stories of increased tensions between Russians and Lithuanians in 1905, although in most cases such relations were described as good: *Vilenskii vremennik*, 21, 24.

142 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, November 26, 1905, LVIA, f. 378, ps. 1905 m., b. 74, l. 12–13 (on the situation in Pociūnėliai, Shavli District).



threat.<sup>143</sup> Such cases reveal the development of the idea of a national Lithuania, in which Lithuanians were masters of the country and had the right to decide whether members of other ethnic groups had a right to live there: "agitation is underway among Lithuanians that is aimed at removing people who do not belong to the Lithuanian nationality."<sup>144</sup> In the view of the authorities, the situation became very serious at the end of 1905, and officials decided to arm local Russians so they could defend themselves against the Lithuanians.<sup>145</sup> Thus in 1905 the Lithuanian national movement had a clear anti-government and at times anti-Russian character.

### THE MILITARY POGROMS OF 1915

In Lithuania, as in other parts of the Russian Empire, after the letting off of steam during the 1905 Revolution, there was almost no mass violence and, specifically, there were no anti-Jewish pogroms until the beginning of World War I.<sup>146</sup> The American Jewish press reported that a dreadful pogrom took place at Darbėnai in 1908, but it later retracted these reports.<sup>147</sup> In the Lithuanian case, the weakening of Antisemitism among Lithuanian nationalists discussed in the second chapter of this study and the fact that the imperial government managed to introduce control over public order are both important. Although Judeophobic flyers did appear in major Lithuanian towns on the eve of the war, sometimes agitating not only for the boycotting of Jewish trade but also the beating of Jews, such agitation did not lead to outbreaks of mass violence.<sup>148</sup> Most Jewish accounts collected after

143 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, November 9, 1905, *ibid.*, I. 4 (on the situation in Radviliškis's Rural District, Shavli District).

144 Secret report from Kovno governor to Vil'na governor general, November 26, 1905, *ibid.*, I. 12–13.

145 File "O vooruzhenii naseleniia po Vilenskoi, Kovenskoi i Grodnenskoi guberniiam," *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1905 m., b. 76.

146 The Buivydžiai pogrom was discussed in Chapter One.

147 Goldstein, "The Social Geography," 27–28.

148 Files "Po soobshcheniiu gazet o rasprostranении uchashchimisia g. Vil'ny listkov, prizyvaiushchikh k boikotu evreev," *LVIA*, f. 567, ap. 26, b. 1015; "Ob obnaruzhenii 10 oktiabria 1913 goda v gor. Kovne 15 loskutkov bumagi s nadpis'iu 'Khristiane. Beite zhidov' (6 p. 129 st. Ugol. ulozh.)," *LVIA*, f. 1227, ap. 1, b. 1590.

the 1915 military pogroms, which are discussed below, asserted that Jewish-Christian relations were good (peaceful and normal)<sup>149</sup> before the war, and tensions were mentioned in only a minority of cases, especially in connection with economic competition.<sup>150</sup> The authorities were particularly afraid of Judeophobic actions during the infamous Beilis case, and Jews themselves mentioned increased antipathy,<sup>151</sup> but we have no data to show that preconditions existed for collective violence against Jews. Moreover, the police kept an eye on the situation and took preventative measures.<sup>152</sup>

The beginning of the war created various situations that undermined the prewar social status quo. New focuses of tension appeared, connected with alleged or actual sympathies of separate parts of society or ethnic groups for the warring sides. Many among the authorities and military elite suspected the Jews of having pro-German sentiments. There is Jewish evidence claiming that both Lithuanians and Poles accused the Jews of pro-German sentiment, as well as the artificial raising of prices and the selling of various valuables, primarily gold, to the Germans.<sup>153</sup> Jewish accounts maintained that Lithuanian villages were rife with legends of Jews handing over information and valuables to German aircraft making regular stops. There are tales of geese being fed golden coins in order to smuggle the gold to the Germans; of putting fortress plans in bottles and floating them down the Nemunas

149 Eyewitness evidence gathered by the Jewish Relief Committee for War Victims, *GARF*, f. 9458, op. 1, d. 164, l. 190, 192, 197, 220, 272, 282, 284, 292; *ibid.*, d. 165, l. 1, 57, 61; *ibid.*, d. 167, l. 28, 81, 254, 254, 279, 280, 281, 282, 284, 290, 292; *ibid.*, d. 145, l. 16; *ibid.*, d. 163, l. 4, 5, 64, 68; *ibid.*, f. 579, op. 1, d. 2001, l. 7; L. Borisov, "Pis'ma s Litvy. IV. Kal'variia," *Rassvet* 47 (1914): 15.

150 Eyewitness evidence gathered by the Jewish Relief Committee for War Victims, *GARF*, f. 9458, op. 1, d. 164, l. 225, 249, *ibid.*, d. 165, l. 4, 61, 81, 100.

151 Eyewitness evidence gathered by the Jewish Relief Committee for War Victims, *GARF*, f. 9458, op. 1, d. 164, l. 272; *ibid.*, d. 167, l. 254.

152 File "O priniatii mer k nedopushcheniiu kakikh-by to nibylo ulichnyh vystuplenii 22 Sentiabria v den' sudebnogo razsmotreniia dela Beilisa," *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 24440.

153 A witness account of the Germans in Suvalki, October 1, 1914, *YIVO*, RG 1400 (Bund Archives) M-14 Box 12, Folder 117, l. 1-2; Khaesh, "On the Front Line in Lithuania"; Khaesh, "The Expulsion of the Jews"; eyewitness evidence gathered by the Jewish Relief Committee for War Victims, *GARF*, f. 9458, op. 1, d. 164, l. 192, 197, 249, 272, 278, 282, 284; d. 165, l. 4, 57, 61, 81; d. 167, l. 162, 166, 254, 279, 284, 290, 292; d. 163, l. 6, 68.

River,<sup>154</sup> and so on. The Jewish press rightly blamed Lithuanian clericalists, and primarily the newspaper *Viltis*, for whipping up Judeophobic sentiment.<sup>155</sup> It is hard to believe there was sincere concern from both Lithuanian clericalists and ordinary villagers or townsfolk over alleged Jewish pro-German sentiment. Most likely, part of Christian Lithuanian society took advantage of the well-known Judeophobic leanings of the Russian ruling elite and military command.

Mockery of Jewish pro-German sentiment almost led to a pogrom in Kamajai on October 8, 1914. Granted, alongside the tale provided by Christian witnesses of how the conflict began in the market from mutual verbal abuse, there is also an account given by Jewish participants in the squabble, according to which Christians—more accurately, conscripts—attacked them for no reason or pretext. The beginning of the conflict was a typical minor incident, where Jews not only had a physical advantage and the nearest conscript had to run away but also committed vigilante justice and beat up a conscript after a local policeman had arrested him. As was usual in such a situation, there were cries that “Jews are beating our people up,” and the balance of power soon changed. The Jews were compelled to run away from armed conscripts, who later spread through the small town and smashed windows in the synagogue and eleven Jewish houses. Only the short duration of the incident prevents it from being classified as a pogrom. The ethnic violence would probably have escalated had it not been for the decisive action taken by local officials—at least, that was the assessment of several witnesses.<sup>156</sup> Even so, this incident was very minor in comparison with what Jews endured in 1915.

In 1915 the Russian army command decided to transfer Jews from part of Kovno and Courland Provinces, alleging that they were disloyal.<sup>157</sup> According to contemporary estimates, around half the Jews

154 L. Borisov, “Pis'ma s Litvy. I,” *Rassvet* 44 (1914): 11.

155 L. Borisov, “Pis'ma s Litvy. II. V litovskoi presse,” *Rassvet* 45 (1914): 16–18; L. B. [L. Borisov], “V Kovenskoi gubernii. Beseda s chlenami Gosudarstvennoi Dumy g. g. Keinisom i Ianushkevichem,” *Rassvet* 50 (1914): 11, L. Borisov, “Pis'ma s Litvy,” *Rassvet* 2 (1915): 17–19. One such text that obviously provoked antisemitic sentiment was published in the 215th issue of *Viltis* in 1914: M. [?], “Telšiai padangėje [Beneath the Skies of Tel'shi],” *Viltis* 215 (1914).

156 File “Po obvineniiu Osipa Iankovskago, Shamuila Vainshteina i Aiko-Vul'fa Shapiro v proizvodstve ssory, draki i buistva,” *KAA*, f. I-50, ap. 1, b. 24764.

157 Goldin, “Deportation of Jews,” 40–73; Goldin, “Deportatsiia russkoi armiei evreev,” 260–265; Goldin, “Russkoe komandovanie,” 29–46; Lohr, “Novye dokumenty,” 245–268.

in Kovno and Courland Provinces (160,000 and 30,000 people, respectively) were deported at this time along with 40,000 from Grodno and Suvalki Provinces.<sup>158</sup> In certain parts of Lithuania, the deportation of Jews was welcomed, with the expectation that the number of Christian trade establishments would then double.<sup>159</sup>

In many places in Lithuania, the deportations were accompanied by pogroms organized by Russian army units, especially Cossacks, in which property as well as people suffered. Pogroms also took place after Russian units withdrew from a location, defeated German forces, and then returned. Witnesses often reported cases of rape. Jewish accounts frequently report that local inhabitants encouraged soldiers to resort to violence or joined them in plundering Jewish property;<sup>160</sup> sometimes they took over Jewish property in the wake of the deportations (as at Pikeliai, Tel'shi District; Šėta, Ukmergė [Vil'komir] District; Krakiai, Kovno District; Tytuvėnai, Rossieny District; Salakas, Novoaleksandrovsk [Zarasai] District; Suvalki, and elsewhere<sup>161</sup>). Moreover, there were cases where local Gentiles mocked or openly rejoiced at the suffering of Jews.<sup>162</sup> However, the numerous witness

158 Goldin, "Deportation of Jews," 58.

159 L. Kryževičius, "Pašvitiny [In Pašvitinys]," *Rygos garsas* 62 (1915).

160 Eyewitness evidence gathered by the Jewish Relief Committee for War Victims, GARF, f. 9458, op. 1, d. 164, l. 190, 225, 252, 273, 285, 317; d. 165, l. 61, 103; d. 167, l. 283; d. 163, l. 5, 6, 11, 14, 64–65; d. 169, l. 103; d. 145, l. 96; f. 579, op. 1, d. 2052, l. 18, 20.

161 On deportation of Jews from Kovno Province, YIVO, RG 80 File 1062, l. 79433, 79436, 79438, 79440, 79446, 79447; Information on pogroms in Suvalki, YIVO, RG 1401, Box 46, Folder 590, pages unnumbered; files "Kopii dokumentov o material'nom polozhenii i o vyselenii evreev zapadnykh gubernii"; "Materialy ob otnoshenii soldat, voennykh chastei, k evreiskomu naseleniiu," *TsGIASP*, f. 2129, op.1, d. 67, 69; "Materialy o evreiskikh pogromakh v Pol'she i antisemit-skoi agitatsii sredi voisk i naseleniia," *RNB OR*, f. 332, d. 58; "Proshenie evreiskogo naseleniia ob ograzhdenii ot pogromov," *RGIA*, f. 1546, op. 1, d. 236; *GARF*, f. 9458, op. 1, d. 164, l. 151, 166–171, 190, 286, 317; d. 165, l. 3, 53, 77–78, 94, 107, 152, 157, 254, 255; d. 140, l. 75; d. 163, l. 4, 7, 65, 84, 89; d. 164, l. 151, 166–171, 190, 286, 317; d. 165, l. 3, 53, 77–78, 94, 107, 152, 157, 254, 255; d. 140, l. 75; d. 163, l. 4, 7, 65, 84, 89; "Iz 'Chernoi knigi,'" 165–296; Kagan, *Yizkor-Bukh Suvalk*, 327–32; Khaesh, "On the Front Line in Lithuania"; Khaesh, "The Expulsion"; Lohr, "1915 and the War Pogrom Paradigm," 42–43; Lohr, *Russkii natsionalizm*, 171–177.

162 Eyewitness evidence gathered by the Jewish Relief Committee for War Victims, GARF, f. 9458, op. 1, d. 164, l. 317; d. 165, l. 3, 5.

reports do not mention the fact that local people, rather than army units, started pogroms in Lithuania in 1915.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, in the vast majority of cases, local Gentiles were accused of plundering Jewish property but not of attacking the people.

There were cases where sympathy was expressed for the deported Jews: "The removal of the Jews was a great cause for grief for all of us. I did not like them very much. But now I feel they are closer to me. Thousands of them walked through Laižuva... Here we did what we could, what every citizen should do. You cannot plunder other people's property! The people of our towns behaved well after the Jews were deported. No Latvian or Samogitian laid a finger on Jewish property. We all preserved our town's honor to a man, and to this day we have not numbered among the thieves."<sup>164</sup> Jewish witnesses also mentioned expressions of sympathy and even cases of considerable assistance.<sup>165</sup>

Although the events of 1915 had a powerful effect on Jews, they did not change the general picture of Jewish–Gentile relations during the long nineteenth century discussed in this book: it was rare for large-scale collective violence to erupt within society itself.

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The period of the 1905 Revolution in Lithuania was not only a time of a social movement and national (Lithuanian) uprising but also one when ethnic tension increased (compared to certain other periods), as well as Judeophobic sentiment in part of Gentile society. Certain occurrences of this tension developed into physical violence. There is no doubt that the events in Dusetos on Easter 1905 meet many of the criteria of a pogrom. A few further incidents (in Tel'shi and Gargždai [Kovno Province] and Voronovo [Vil'na Province]) could be described as pogroms, with certain reservations.

The increase in Judeophobic sentiment and the escalation of some incidents of ethnic tension into physical conflicts were conditioned in part by events that took place beyond Lithuanian borders. Anti-Jewish pogroms in other parts of the empire emboldened local Judeophobes

163 This happened, for example, in the Belarusian town of Bobruisk: "Iz 'Chernoi knigi,'" 290.

164 L. [?], "Laižuva. Šiaulių," *Rygos garsas* 66 (1915).

165 Eyewitness evidence gathered by the Jewish Relief Committee for War Victims, *GARF*, f. 9458, op. 1, d. 163, l. 8; d. 164, l. 228.

and created the impression that the authorities would tolerate violence against Jews. Moreover, the revolutionary period, like other instances of political collapse, created favorable conditions for Christians to “put the Jews in their place.” The cases of opposition to the police or army witnessed during occasions of mass violence against Jews, such as at Gargždai, show that people no longer feared the authorities. At the same time, of course, there were local factors that generated Judeophobic sentiment and even violence. One of the most visible such factors was economic nationalism, which was evident in certain incidents (such as at Vieکشniai and Dusetos).

However, the number of pogroms, of people who suffered during them (there was one fatality), and the damage done were very small in comparison with many other regions of the empire with a large Jewish population. The organization of Jewish self-defense units and the actions of local authorities were important factors that halted anti-Jewish violence, but they were hardly decisive. Jewish self-defense organizations were formed in towns and cities of the empire where pogroms did take place. Self-defense units could stop small incidents of violence or even deter potential *pogromshchiks*, but the acquisition and use of firearms could have the opposite effect and encourage even greater antisemitic wrath. During the pogrom in Dusetos, Christians retaliated after the Jews began shooting, that is, broke the accepted “rules of the game.” The actions of local authorities and sometimes of the central authorities were the same in Lithuania as in other parts of the empire. It is important to stress that there were pogroms in Grodno Province, also controlled by the governor general of Vil’na, and in Belostok a pogrom claimed many victims, but this was avoided in Vil’na Province.

Another important reason for the small scale of anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania during the 1905 Revolution—aside from the country’s economic backwardness, which discouraged serious economic rivalry, especially in the towns—was the local ethno-confessional situation. Catholics, who made up the majority, were persecuted by the imperial authorities and discriminated against like the Jews, and so they had no cause to rise to defend the *ancien regime*. Furthermore, the Lithuanian national movement, especially its left wing, had not only a clearly expressed anti-imperial character, but also, on occasion, an anti-Russian character. As mentioned in Chapter Two, this movement was also typically anti-Polish: the left wing fought the Poles

(estate owners) for social reasons, while the right wing sought to protect Lithuanians from Polonization. The anti-Polish and anti-Russian nature of the Lithuanian national movement encouraged its members to seek out allies, and given the ethnic constitution of Lithuania, only Jews could fulfill this role. This treatment of Jews as potential allies was more typical of a section of the Lithuanian political elite than the peasantry. Even so, the message that the leaders of the national movement sent the masses at least did not generate antipathy towards the Jews, even if it did not encourage ordinary people to regard the Jewish community as Lithuanian allies.

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## Comparative Perspective

A comparative perspective investigating pogroms is important when trying to answer the question of why in one region—Lithuania—mass anti-Jewish violence was significantly lower than in other lands. In analyzing the situations at the beginning of the 1880s as well as of the 1905 Revolution, we inevitably compared the situation in Lithuania and other regions of the Russian Empire. Meanwhile, this chapter will compare in detail the anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania in three cases. A discussion of the anti-Jewish violence in Belarus and Eastern Galicia (Habsburg Empire) should help explain the small scale of anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the Lithuanian–Polish physical confrontations over the language of supplementary services in the Catholic Church will allow for a comparison of the expressions of anti-Jewish violence with situations when collective violence was directed against other ethnic groups. These three situations, of course, are not the only ones suitable for such comparative investigation. In Courland, just as in Lithuania, the scale of anti-Jewish violence was very low,<sup>2</sup> but Courland was not in the Jewish Pale of Settlement, although previously established Jews were allowed to live there. Consequently, there were fewer Jews (about 24,000 in 1852; 57,000 in 1914). Moreover, in this case, the relative sizes (three provinces versus one) make them unsuitable for comparison.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the Kingdom of Poland (ten provinces), in which there were also very few pogroms (the best-known of which were those in December 1881 in Warsaw—mentioned in Chapter Three—in 1902 in Cześćochowa,<sup>4</sup> and in 1906 in Siedlce), is signifi-

1 The situation in Galicia will be discussed here relying only on historiography.

2 Bogojavlenska, *Die jüdische Gesellschaft*, 206–212.

3 In the two remaining Baltic provinces (Livonia and Estonia), which were also not in the Pale of Settlement, there were very few Jews.

4 Secret account on anti-Jewish violence in Cześćochowa from an unidentified official, August 30, 1902 (N.S.), *AGAD*, Pomocnik Warszawskiego General Gubernatora do spraw policyjnych, 699, k. 14–15; Weeks, “Polish–Jewish Relations,” 240.



cantly larger than the three provinces of Lithuania, but could still be the subject of a future comparative study.<sup>5</sup>

WHY WERE THERE MORE POGROMS IN BELARUS  
THAN IN LITHUANIA?

Belarus is very suitable for comparison with Lithuania when investigating the anti-Jewish pogroms. At the beginning of the 1880s, when a wave of pogroms rippled through the southern part of the Russian Empire, the situation in the Lithuanian and Belarusian provinces was very similar. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, essential differences emerged. Thus, comparing the situation in these two regions at the beginning of the twentieth century should help illuminate why Lithuania, with its very small number of pogroms, was such an exceptional area of the Jewish Pale of Settlement.<sup>6</sup>

In this case Belarus as well as Lithuania are understood here as they were generally understood in the nineteenth century, especially its second half—that is, the provinces of Grodno, Vitebsk, Mogilev, and Minsk, in which most of the population consisted of ethnic Belarusians. We chose a territory that was not ethnographically Belarusian because the whole Northwestern Region was ethnically heterogeneous. In the cities, where the pogroms most often occurred, a significant part of the population consisted not of Belarusians or Lithuanians but Poles or Russians (and, of course, Jews), and in rural areas there were even other ethnic or ethno-confessional groups (Old

5 There have not been many investigations about pogroms in the Kingdom of Poland, and the ones that exist frequently focus less on the cases of collective violence against Jews than on their interpretations (especially concerning the 1881 pogrom in Warsaw). We were told that the archival records about the 1881 events reserved in the AGAD could not be accessed due to their “poor condition.”

6 In this case, we will rely on the relatively sparse historiography (we do not know of any monograph devoted to an analysis of the pogroms in Belarus), as well as published and unpublished primary sources, mainly from the archives of Russia and Lithuania. The discussion of the situation in Belarus will be very limited, primarily due to the lack of space. A separate monograph could be written just about the pogrom on June 1–3, 1906, in Belostok, given the abundance of sources and the symbolic significance of this event in the early-twentieth-century Romanov Empire.

Believers, Poles, Latvians). Moreover, during the pogroms it is impossible to identify all the perpetrators, not to mention their ethnic or national origin. As mentioned in the introduction, the Belarusian provinces were dominated by an Orthodox population, not a Catholic one as in Lithuania (55 percent in Vitebsk, 57 percent in Grodno, 73 percent in Minsk, and 83 percent in Mogilev, according to 1897 data).

In Belarus the pogroms were not completely identical: the ethno-confessional composition of the population, the level of industrialization, the level of activity of various political organizations, local government actions, the time of the pogroms, the number of victims, and/or the amount of damage was different. Nevertheless, there were also many similarities. Moreover, many of the pogroms took place at the same time (after the October 1905 Manifesto). Therefore, regardless of how important the specific circumstances of a particular pogrom were (for example, in the case of Belostok, an important factor was the May 1906 murder of police chief Pavel Derkachov, who had impeded the anti-Jewish violence<sup>7</sup>), it makes sense to look for common reasons for the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence in Belarus.

In the early 1880s in the Belarusian provinces, just as in the Lithuanian ones, various sources report an increased anti-Jewish sentiment in Christian society. More than once it happened that some Christian, unhappy for whatever reason, would threaten the Jews with a pogrom.<sup>8</sup> The main source of the growing tension, of course, was the news of the anti-Jewish violence in the southern part of the empire, strengthening the conviction that it was permissible to beat the Jews. As in the Lithuanian provinces, the Jews particularly feared violence after the pogrom in Warsaw in December 1881.<sup>9</sup> Such authorization was allegedly provided by a special imperial decree.<sup>10</sup> This wave of pogroms in the south clearly affected the Belarusian provinces that

7 Sohn, "Der Groyser Pogrom," 28; Korzec, "Pogrom bialostocki," 159.

8 *Rassvet* 6 (1882): 223 and 17 (1882): 635; I. Maze, "Berezina, Minsk gub.," *Russkii evrei* 36 (1881): 1415–1416; A. Gol'berg, "M. Liakhovich', Minskoi gub. (Korrespondentsia 'Russkogo evreia')," *ibid.*, 46 (1881): 1815–1816; M. M-ski [?], "Slonim (Grod. Gub.), 21-go marta," *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 15 (1882): 385–386.

9 M.B. [?], "Slonim," *Russkii evrei* 2 (1882): 56; "Iz Minska," *ibid.*, 2 (1882): 57; "Iz m. Liakhovich," *ibid.*, 3 (1882): 99; L. Vargafing, "Iz Brest-Litovska," *ibid.*, 6 (1882): 216.

10 "Korrespondentsiia," *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 7 (1882): 157; Krasnyi-Adomoni, *Materialy*, 56.

bordered that area, for many people traveled to Chernigov Province to earn a living. There were also a number of newcomers from that province,<sup>11</sup> so information about the pogroms spread more easily in the adjacent provinces.<sup>12</sup>

Local initiatives to “put the Jews in their place” also appeared. In late March 1881 in Grodno, the rumor was spread that on the eve of Easter, the Jews were planning to kill the Christians. At the same time, there was talk that the Christian houses of worship in this city were mined.<sup>13</sup> Such rumors served to mobilize the Christian society for anti-Jewish violence and undoubtedly frightened many Jews. Another tool for mobilizing was various proclamations mobilizing Christians, sometimes even providing specific dates to attack the Jews.<sup>14</sup> The Jews were also accused of ritual murder.<sup>15</sup>

This widespread belief that beating the Jews was allowed often gave Christians the feeling that they were masters of the situation. Thus they tried to “teach” the Jews, sometimes using physical force or demeaning them in some way. In the Belarusian provinces, like in the Lithuanian ones in the early 1880s, there were many instances of minor anti-Jewish violence or brawls in which the warring sides were divided according to ethno-religious identity.<sup>16</sup> In Minsk the Jews firmly believed that they could not prevent a pogrom.<sup>17</sup> In particular,

11 Reports from Mogilev governor to the minister of interior, April 8 and 14, 1882, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 otdel, op. 39, 1882 g., d. 512, l. 23–24, 29–30; report from Mogilev governor to the minister of interior, May 7, 1882, *ibid.*, d. 513, l. 44–46.

12 Workers from Chernigov Province caused the fights in Pinsk on April 22, 1884: report from the chief of staff of the Minsk Province gendarmerie to the Police Department, April 25, 1884; report from Minsk governor to the minister of interior, April 29, 1884, *ibid.*, d. 280, ch. 13, l. 10–12.

13 File “O rasprostranivshimsia v g. Grodne slukhe o namerenii evreev pererezat’ khristian v noch’ na Sviatoe Voskresenie 1881 goda,” *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1881 m., b. 43; *Vilenskii vestnik* 79 (1881); *Rassvet* 16 (1881): 1617.

14 Krasnyi-Adomoni, *Materialy*, 56; report from the chief of staff of the Grodno Province gendarmerie to the Police Department, May 19, 1882, and the copy of an appeal, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 deloproizvodstvo, 1882 g., d. 280, ch. 18, l. 1–3. The Jewish press also wrote about threats to burn down Jewish homes: *Rassvet* 27 (1881): 1061–1062.

15 “Vnutrennee obozrenie,” *Rassvet* 16 (1881): 613.

16 “Pogromy i pozhary,” *ibid.*, 26 (1882): 985; “Pogromy,” *ibid.*, 27 (1882): 1023. For more on this, see Staliūnas, “Anti-Jewish Disturbances,” 122; Le Foll, “The Missing Pogroms,” 160.

17 Wengeroff, *Memoiren einer Grossmutter*, 190–192.

officials often mention the railway workers as the main inciters of anti-Jewish sentiment.<sup>18</sup> One of these incidents had signs of a pogrom. In the town of Klimovichi (Mogilev Province), about ten drunk young townspeople initially broke the windows of a Jewish tavern and then attacked the adjacent house of a Jewish merchant, as well as later smashing the windows of houses of other Jews, until they were stopped by the police.<sup>19</sup>

In the early 1880s, the scale of anti-Jewish violence was minor in both Lithuanian and Belarusian provinces. Yet, during the 1905 Revolution and even on its eve, the situation in these two regions already differed radically.

The first widely publicized pogrom in Belarus in the twentieth century took place in 1903. Along with the Easter 1903 pogrom in Kishinev, the September 1–2 events in Gomel' are regarded in historiography as the beginning of a new wave of anti-Jewish violence in the Russian Empire that lasted until 1906. The trigger for the crackdown on Jews was an August 29 incident in the market between a Jewish woman seller and a Christian buyer. The minor incident probably would not have escalated into a pogrom if it had followed one of the "usual scenarios," that is, of a conflict between the two persons, or a Christian victory. However, in the brawl the organized Jews (in the city the Bund, which had organized a self-defense group of about 200, had significant influence) were stronger. The situation was aggravated by the fact that one peasant died from stab wounds. In the view of the Christians, primarily the railway workshop workers and peasants of the neighboring villages, the Jews violated certain "unwritten rules," and this had to be avenged. The pogrom that took place on September 1 and 2 in Gomel' claimed victims on both sides: seven (according to other sources, twelve) Jews and five (or eight) Christians

18 An excerpt from a report of the executive head of the Minsk province gendarmes; a secret report of the Minsk governor to the minister of the interior, May 24, 1882, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 otd., 1882 g., d. 280, ch. 13, l. 2–3, 6; Krasnyi-Adomoni, *Materialy*, 56. Other sources also mention this professional group's participation in the anti-Jewish actions: "Gazetnye izvestiia i soobshcheniia," *Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda* 31 (1882): 848. This professional group was also active in anti-Jewish campaigns in other regions of the empire: Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, 60.

19 Report from Mogilev governor to minister of interior, May 7, 1882, *GARF*, f. 102, 2 otd., 1882 g., d. 513, l. 44–46.

were killed. Both the revolutionary party of that time and current Belarusian historiography asserted that local officials and the anti-semitic intelligentsia organized the pogrom, and furthermore, that the army, assisted by the police, aided the perpetrators of violence. However, even the information cited by the historiography shows clearly that the police tried to hold back the pogrom-makers.<sup>20</sup> Of course, both the army and the police took actions against Jewish self-defense, which used firearms. The historical literature suggests that some local government officials tried to stop the large-scale violence, while others tolerated it and even assisted the perpetrators of the violence. The Gomel' pogrom had an additional symbolic meaning: it was here that the perpetrators first encountered organized Jewish resistance.<sup>21</sup>

In the autumn of 1904 and in January 1905, a wave of "mobilization-triggered" pogroms rippled through the Russian Empire. "Mobilization-triggered" referred to the fact that the main, though not the only, perpetrators were men recruited into the army for the Russo-Japanese War. Many of these pogroms did indeed take place in the Belarusian provinces. In Mogilev Province, according to various data, there were between twelve and fourteen pogroms, in Vitebsk Province from one to six, in Minsk Province up to six, and in Grodno Province at least three.<sup>22</sup> Although in the historiography this wave of pogroms is sometimes associated with a political context (antisemitic propaganda sought to shift the discontent with the unsuccessful war campaign away from the government<sup>23</sup>), it is likely that at least some of

20 Mekhed'ko, "Gomel'skii pogrom," 35–48; Mekhed'ko, "Antievreiskie pogromy," 84–85; Raiskii, "Kak eto bylo?" 91–97.

21 Lambroza, "The Pogroms," 207–209; Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland*, vol. 2, 50–51.

22 Files "Predstavleniia prokurora Grodnenskago okruzhnogo suda po delu o evreiskom pogrome 28 oktiabria 1904 g. v s. Sidel'nikakh Volkovyskogo uезда," *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 8, b. 548; "Perepiska s prokurorom Grodnenskago okruzhnogo suda po delu o (razgrablenii zapasnymi nizhnimi chinami dvizhimago imushchestva 14 domokhoziaev v m. Golyunki) evreiskom pogrome," *ibid.*, b. 547; "O bezporiadekakh imevshikh mesto vo vremia mobilizatsii," *LVIA*, f. 378, ps, 1904 m., b. 61; "Predstavleniia prokurora Grodnenskago okruzhnogo suda po delu o evreiskom pogrome 11 ianvaria 1905 g. v Volkovyske," *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 4, b. 612; Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement*, 94; Lambroza, "The Pogroms," 215–218; Mekhed'ko, "Antievreiskie pogromy," 24–25.

23 Lambroza, *The Pogrom Movement*, 92–94.

the anti-Jewish violence did not have so much political<sup>24</sup> as social roots. The young men recruited into the army troops were often poorly equipped at the mobilization points, so what they lacked, as well as alcohol, they tried by both legal and illegal means to acquire from the local traders, most of whom were Jews. Moreover, detailed information on several pogroms shows that the destruction or seizure of goods was an important element. The young men going into army thought they had the right to punish the Jews, because they believed the Jews were avoiding military service. Some of these events suggest that the conscripts considered themselves a privileged group. In Volkovysk, while looting an alcohol warehouse, they shouted, "we belong to the state [*kazennye*], the czar is ours and the vodka is ours," and they chased away the local peasants who attempted to join in, saying, "Where are you meddling? You do not have the right to [take] state vodka, because you are not reserve soldiers."

During the 1905 Revolution, the differences between the Lithuanian and Belarusian provinces became even more pronounced. According to Shlomo Lambroza, around forty pogroms took place in the four Belarusian provinces in 1905–1906: fifteen in Mogilev Province, ten each in Grodno and Vitebsk Provinces, and five in Minsk Province.<sup>25</sup> An especially large cluster of pogroms occurred several weeks after the proclamation of the manifesto of October 17, 1905.<sup>26</sup> Some of them not only ended in the devastation of Jewish property, but also claimed victims. On October 21–22, 1905, fifteen Jews and two Russians were killed in Orsha (Mogilev Province), during the October 23–24 pogrom in Rechytza (Minsk Province), seven people were killed and

24 Here in Dubrovka village (Rudnianskaia Parish, Gorodskoi District, Vitebsk Province) the house of a Jewish man was allegedly attacked after the peasants got word that the man's sons, who were in the army reserve, had fled to Japan (the implication being that they were associating with Russia's enemies): Report of the Vitebsk Province gendarmes executive head to the Police Department, March 4, 1905, *GARF*, f. 102, 4 deloproizvodstvo, 1905 g., d. 2000, ch. 7, l. 21.

25 Lambroza, "The Pogroms," 228. These numbers might not be very accurate; for example, in Lithuanian case the numbers are much too high. Moreover, he did not use archival sources for his research.

26 Some historians identify ten pogroms during the first ten days after the publication of the manifesto (Smilovitskii, *Evrei Belarusi*, 33). Others count twenty-three in the second half of October (Mekhed'ko, "Antievreiskie pogromy," 86). All agree that, just as in 1904, the most pogroms were in Mogilev Province.

twenty-three injured,<sup>27</sup> while at the same time in the Polotsk pogrom fourteen were killed, forty injured, and twenty-five shops vandalized.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the most severe and best-known pogrom in Belarus occurred not during “freedom days” in the second half of October 1905, but on June 1–3, 1906, in Belostok. There were at least several factors that made the Belostok events in 1906 well known. The first, as contemporaries attested to, was the pogrom’s extreme brutality.<sup>29</sup> According to official data, in the course of three days, eighty-two individuals (seventy-five Jews and seven Christians) were killed, seventy-eight (sixty Jews and eighteen Christians) suffered injuries, 169 apartments and commercial spaces were devastated, and the total loss amounted to 200,000 rubles.<sup>30</sup> The second reason was that the pogrom lasted for three days. Eventually, it became the subject of intense debate in Russia’s Duma, covered extensively by both the Russian and foreign media, so information on it spread more widely than in other cases.

The scale of the Belostok pogrom and the spread of information on it greatly contributed to the fact that its interpretation was very contentious. According to the government, the main perpetrators of the pogrom were the revolutionaries (in other words, the Jews), who terrorized both officials and peaceful civilians for a year and finally, on June 1, began to shoot at Catholic and Orthodox religious processions

27 Amanzholova, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 167, 173.

28 Letter from an unidentified member of the Union for the Equal Rights of Jews in Russia to the Central Bureau, November 12, 1905, *RGIA*, f. 1565, op. 1, d. 18, l. 6.

29 “They chopped, stabbed, shot, cut, and beat! And all this occurred amid atrocities that make one’s hair stand on end. They grabbed people by the legs and smashed their heads on the paving stones. They cut off the breasts of women. They hammered huge nails in people’s temples. There was even one corpse found with a huge stake hammered in its throat. People were hung by the skin of the abdomen”: “K belostokskomu pogromu,” *Svobodnoe slovo* 18 (1906).

30 “Pravitel’svennoe soobshchenie,” *Pravitel’svennyi vestnik* 138 (1906). In historiography, these numbers vary. Various statistics say seventy-eight were killed, most of them Jews (Petrovsky-Shtern, *Jews in the Russian Army*, 232); that eighty-eight Jews were killed and 700 injured (Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok*, 58); that as many as 200 Jews were killed and 700 wounded (Lambroza, “The Pogrom Movement,” 247; Kobrin, “Bialystok,” 180–181); and that eighty-two Jews were killed and 700 wounded (Ascher, “Anti-Jewish Pogroms,” 137). The number of Jewish victims of the pogrom was probably about eighty.

and threw explosive devices. Such revolutionary (Jewish) activities exhausted the patience of ordinary people, and the pogrom arose spontaneously, the government maintained. The increase in anti-Jewish violence was also allegedly conditioned by the former economic competition in Belostok between workers of different faiths, particularly in the textile industry. Meanwhile, the army tried to stop the perpetrators. The government report indicated that the police forces did not always manage to maintain order, but that was blamed on the revolutionaries, who by their terrorist actions weakened the police.<sup>31</sup> The rightist Russian press maintained a similar version, even adding that the Jews organized the pogrom so that later they could receive pity as victims and the much-coveted equal rights.<sup>32</sup> The opposition provided another interpretation of the events in Belostok. Left-wing parties, as well as the press accused the government of organizing this pogrom.<sup>33</sup> Some publications reported that near Belostok, at the end of June, a provocateur was arrested who allegedly confessed that on June 1, for a sizable payment, he shot at the mentioned religious processions and thus provoked the pogrom.<sup>34</sup>

However, the most influential interpretation was the report of the commission created by the Russian Duma and the information provided during the debates in the Duma, on which historians often rely.<sup>35</sup> It declared that there had been no animosity between Jews and Christians in Belostok until then. It stated that only right-wing Russians engaged in antisemitic agitation, that local authorities organized the pogrom, and that the army and police actively participated in it.<sup>36</sup> We will return to the Belostok pogrom later, when we will try to find more general causes for the pogroms in Belarus. Now let us briefly assess the weak points of both interpretations.

31 "Pravitel'stvennoe soobshchenie."

32 (N.V.) [?], "Belostok," *Belaia Rus'* 86 (1906); "Kto vinovat?" *ibid.*, 88 (1906); Skeptik [?], "Po povodu belostokskikh sobytii," *ibid.*, 89 (1906).

33 Belarusian Socialist Party proclamation, July 1906, *LMAVB RS*, f. 21, b. 863; Vincas Kapsukas, "Žydų skerdynė Balstogėje [Massacre of Jews in Belostok]," *Naujoji gadynė* 6 (1906): 87–90.

34 Ascher, "Anti-Jewish Pogroms," 140; "Dar apie Balstogės baisenybes [Once Again about Horror in Belostok]," *Vilniaus žinios* 127 (1906).

35 Korzec, "Pogrom białostocki," 149–182; Korzec, *Pół wieku*, 259–281; Szordykowska, "Kwestia żydowska," 3–14; Galai, "Ewreiskie pogromy," 32–42.

36 "Report of the Duma Commission," 70–85.



The Duma commission claimed there had been no animosity between Christians and Jews until the June 1906 events, but this was an attempt to make interethnic relations sound better than they were. There had been physical conflicts between these groups as early as 1881.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, if all the blame is placed on the provocateurs and the government, there is no way to explain the active participation of local Christians in the pogrom.

The official version apparently tried to justify the actions of the local government, especially the military. Meanwhile, not only articles in the newspapers but also the statements of numerous witnesses (including non-Jews) apparently testified that the army and the police condoned the violence, not to mention the firing on actual or alleged Jewish revolutionaries. More than one witness affirmed that the local officials tolerated the violence in the railway station.<sup>38</sup> Their forces alone would have been sufficient to suppress the lightly armed perpetrators. Eventually, in the reports of some government representatives, this fact was also openly stated:

Indeed, in some cases, neither the police nor the army nor government officials carried out their assigned duties. There is evidence that some police officers not only acted criminally by doing nothing, and even making concessions during the violent activities, but even led the violators. The army did not stop the latter from plundering Jewish premises and stealing their property, and in some cases even used weapons against unarmed and peaceful Jews without regard to sex or age. Representatives of the authorities at the station, although they were authorized to prevent unrest and violence, not only did not use the power provided to them but calmly watched the beatings of peaceful Jews and only undertook to defend some of them. In one case, senior gendarmes officer Migane, affected by the absurd and terrible rumors that reached the station from the city about how Jews had allegedly tortured Christians, explicitly urged the locals to beat the Jews.<sup>39</sup>

37 Staliūnas, "Anti-Jewish Disturbances," 122.

38 See file "Ob evreiskom pogrome v g. Belostoke 1–3 iunia 1906 g., t. 1," *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 5, b. 69.

39 Report by the prosecutor, Vil'na Palace of Justice, to the Ministry of Justice, September 18, 1906, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 214.

By their behavior, government representatives sent a clear message to the people that violence against Jews was permitted. In the attempts to stop the pogrom, the violators, surprised, asked “why yesterday was it permitted to beat [the Jews], but today we are not even allowed to enter the city.” Others stated that they “had been granted freedom for three days.”<sup>40</sup> An interesting story happened after the pogrom, when a certain Shablovskii, seeking to escape a charge of theft in the Bielsk District, “confessed” that he had found the objects in his possession during the Belostok pogrom in early June 1906.<sup>41</sup> Thus he believed that looting and perhaps even participation in a pogrom was a smaller offense than simple theft, and maybe not even a punishable deed.

Thus, even this fragmented review of anti-Jewish violence at the beginning of the twentieth century clearly shows that the situation in Belarus had changed dramatically from that in the early 1880s. Furthermore, the differences between the Lithuanian and Belarusian provinces at the beginning of the twentieth century are apparent. When looking for these changes, as well as the reasons for the differences with Lithuania, we will discuss the potential impact of these factors: government actions; the peculiarities of the actions of Jewish revolutionaries; possible external influences; socioeconomic as well as some demographic changes; and various influences of nationalism.

Soldiers organized some of the pogroms in Belarus, such as those that occurred on May 22, 29, and 31, 1905, in Brest-Litovsk, and these can be considered a continuation of the mobilization pogroms.<sup>42</sup> According to the available information, pogroms not organized by the local population during the 1905 Revolution in Belarus were rare. Because they cannot explain the dynamics of interethnic relations in specific areas, they will not be examined here in more detail.<sup>43</sup>

The charges that the imperial authorities organized the pogroms in Belarus in 1903–1906 have the same deficiency as the similar interpret-

40 LVIA, f. 446, ap. 5, b. 69, l. 53, 56; testimony of an Orthodox clergyman, RGIA, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 78.

41 Decision of the Vil'na courthouse deputy prosecutor to discontinue the prosecution, January 1908, LVIA, f. 446, ap. 5, b. 69, l. 368.

42 File “Perepiska s prokurorom Grodnenskogo okruzhnogo suda i Brestskim politsmeisterom o evreiskom pogrome v g. Brest-Litovske 29 Maia 1905 g.,” LVIA, f. 446, ap. 4, b. 611.

43 The events in Minsk on April 15, 1897, can be considered to be this type of pogrom: Petrovsky-Shtern, *Jews in the Russian Army*, 229–230.

ations of events in 1881–1882. They cannot explain why pogroms took place in some regions of the Russian Empire and not in others—as seen earlier, in Lithuania there were barely any. The allegation that the central government or even higher local officials sought to teach the Jewish revolutionaries a lesson is not very convincing, because in Lithuania the Jewish socialist parties were also very active and, as already mentioned, at one point in the fall of 1905 even controlled the situation in Vil'na. The participation in, or instigation of, the pogroms by specific civil government officials or police officers, as well as officers and soldiers, can explain the different causes of individual pogroms or their progress but not such large differences between the Lithuanian and Belarusian provinces. Chapter Five mentioned that representatives of the government also made such efforts in the Lithuanian provinces, but they were not successful. Even fewer arguments can be found concerning the higher authorities' intentions to organize pogroms. Grodno Province, where pogroms took place, was subordinate to the governor general of Vil'na. Thus, it would be difficult to find rational arguments to explain why the government allegedly organized pogroms only in Grodno Province but not in Vil'na or Kovno Provinces. Hence other explanations must be sought. Let us start with the “revolutionary footprint” in Belostok.

The anarchists established strong positions in Belostok.<sup>44</sup> Their influence in the city began to increase starting in 1903 and reached its peak in 1905–1906.<sup>45</sup> One of the main activities of the Belostok anarchists was terrorist attacks, directed not only against the state institutions or particular policemen or officials but also against private property and individual “bourgeois,” as they called them, whose activities the anarchists found reprehensible.<sup>46</sup> During those attacks different

44 There were anarchist groups also in Lithuania, for example, in Vil'na and Kovno, but their influence was not as significant as in Belostok. The anarchists themselves asserted that they were the most influential revolutionary group in Belostok: Kołodziej, *Anarchizm i anarchiści*, 68; Belostochanin [?], “Iz istorii,” 12; Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle*, 133–134. Gerasimov recently cited the activities of the anarchists as important in explaining the rise of pogroms: Gerasimov review of *Anti-Jewish Violence*, 411–412.

45 N. [?], “Di anarkhisten ba der arbeyt. (A brif fun bialostok) [Anarchists at Work. Letter from Belostok],” *Folkshtsaytung* 71 (1906): 5; Shtufler, “Tsvay pionern,” 47–55; Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 17–18.

46 Korzec, *Pół wieku*, 259; Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 46–47.

weapons—knives, firearms, and explosive charges—were used.<sup>47</sup> The Bund newspaper *Folkstsaytung* (People's Newspaper) described the activities of the anarchists in Belostok: "every day bombs were thrown at the houses of factory owners and factory managers; the whole city was terrorized!"<sup>48</sup> By the summer of 1906, the local police had suffered significant losses: eight policemen were killed and seventeen wounded.<sup>49</sup> At one time, sources state, the anarchists in Belostok even considered blowing up a whole street.<sup>50</sup> Most of the anarchists were Jews,<sup>51</sup> while at the same time, it was obvious that they comprised a very small part of the Jewish community in Belostok. Moreover, most of them had broken their ties with the Jewish world. At the peak of the movement, it is believed that Belostok had about 200 anarchists.<sup>52</sup> However, the local government and part of the public still believed that the entire Jewish community was responsible for the Jewish revolutionaries, primarily the activities of the anarchists. Here is how this approach was formulated after the June 1–3 pogrom in the indictment prepared by the prosecutors:

Due to such a situation, and most of all, due to the Belostok Jews' unwillingness to help the government expose the crimes the Jewish revolutionaries were committing in their presence in broad daylight in the city center, the latter in most cases remained unpunished. Meanwhile, the frequent murders of police officers, as well as attacks on civilians, carried out by Jewish revolutionaries severely angered the Belostok Christian population, most of whom did not sympathize with the revolutionary actions, which disturbed the normal flow of life in the city and hindered those who wished to pursue their own affairs peacefully. Moreover, the indignation against these Jewish revolutionaries was transferred to all the Jews of the city, because the

47 Belostochanin [?], "Iz istorii," 7, 8, 13, 14, 16, 17, 24, 26–28.

48 N. [?], "Di anarkhisten ba der arbeyt," 6.

49 A copy of the list of policemen who were killed or injured in the line of duty, LVIA, 378, ps, 1906 m., b. 35, t. 1, l. 129.

50 Kołodziej, *Anarchizm i anarchiści*, 71.

51 Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 44.

52 Ibid., 42–43.

latter, for their part, took no measures to end the criminal activities of their revolutionary youth.<sup>53</sup>

Even the press of the Bund blamed the anarchists for provoking the pogroms with their terrorist activities.<sup>54</sup>

No one was really concerned with the circumstance that these anarchists followed not an ethnic or religious but a class ideology and likewise attacked Jewish businesses<sup>55</sup> or those Jews who did not accept the anarchist ideology and methods. In Krinki (Grodno Province) on January 9, 1906, a young anarchist, Benjamin Fridman, threw a bomb into a school when moderate Jews, who wanted to discuss methods for fighting against the anarchists, were assembled in it.<sup>56</sup> This explains (but does not justify) the behavior of part of the Belostok population and especially the soldiers and policemen during the time of the pogrom.<sup>57</sup>

It is important to note that during the pogrom, the “bastion” of the anarchists and other revolutionaries in Belostok—Surazhskaia Street—did not suffer any damage at all; the perpetrators did not dare enter there.<sup>58</sup> The historiography states that the self-defense squads created by various Jewish political groups defended this area and, in general, saved many Jewish lives. However, as mentioned earlier in this book, such activities, particularly the use of firearms, most often escalated the conflicts and increased the number of victims.

53 Accusation, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 5, b. 69, l. 23. After the 1903 Gomel' pogrom, the Mogilev governor allegedly told the Jewish representatives that if they were unable to educate their youths properly, then “you could at least ‘expose’ them by turning them in to the police. But you aren’t doing so, you are covering up for them...” Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, 157.

54 Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 153.

55 Belostochanin [?], “Iz istorii,” 7.

56 Report by the Grodno District prosecutor, January 10, 1906, sent to the prosecutor, Vil’na Palace of Justice, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 4, b. 674, l. 12.

57 Here is how the situation was described in the indictment: “... Finally, the resentment against the Jews that had existed in Belostok among the soldiers of the garrison because, due to the activities of the Jewish revolutionaries, they had to perform, in addition to their military service duties, the difficult service of maintaining order in the city, as well as because, among those soldiers, there were those who had been the victims of the Jews’ terrorist acts”: *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 5, b. 69, l. 23.

58 Sohn, “Der groyser pogrom in bialystok,” 29–30.

Of course, in Lithuania, primarily in Vil'na, the revolutionaries, as well as the Jews, also used similar terrorist methods.<sup>59</sup> Probably the most famous of these was the unsuccessful 1902 attack by Hirsh Lekert on Vil'na Governor Viktor Val'. The available information would suggest that in Vil'na such attacks were not as common as in Belostok. Yet, there were other factors that triggered anti-Jewish feelings and violence in Belarus.

The geographical position of the Belarusian provinces could have had some influence on the intensity of the anti-Jewish feeling—they were adjacent to the provinces that, from the beginning of the 1880s, experienced a large number of pogroms. So in late October 1905, at the very peak of the anti-Jewish pogroms, the greatest number occurred mainly in Chernigov Province (ninety pogroms) and Kiev Province (forty-five pogroms),<sup>60</sup> bordering Mogilev and Minsk Provinces. Hence the news about the massive anti-Jewish violence reached the Belarusian provinces more swiftly, and it was easier to believe that it was all happening with the permission of the government. Moreover, arrivals from other provinces helped cause some of the pogroms in Belarus.<sup>61</sup> However, the main reasons for the pogroms must be sought in the society of Belarus itself.

Let us start with the socioeconomic and demographic factors. It has already been mentioned that in historical literature, the increase in ethnic tension and its transformation into physical conflicts was sometimes associated with rapid modernization, primarily with industrialization and urbanization, which increase competition in the labor market. Extreme social tensions can arise during economic crises, especially when migrant populations are involved. In Lithuania, as well as in Belarus, industrialization was "late." Here mainly small factories and workshops were created. In terms of the degree of industrialization (the number of large enterprises, volume of production, etc.), the whole former territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania lagged far

59 Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle*, 131–133.

60 Stepanov, *Chernaia sotnia*, 77.

61 For example, this happened in Loev (Minsk Province), where workers arriving from Kiev Province most likely incited the anti-Jewish sentiment: Amanzholova, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 167. In Dvinsk (until 1893 Dinaburg; now Daugavpils) someone named Belopolskii, who came from Zhitomir, tried to incite the pogrom: excerpt from a private letter, *RGIA*, f. 1565, op.1, d. 18, l. 9.

behind the industrialized regions of the Russian Empire.<sup>62</sup> Of course, this image changes if we include the Belostok region of Grodno Province,<sup>63</sup> which was next to the administrative border with the Kingdom of Poland. There, due to the duties introduced by Russia, the textile industry flourished. Indeed, in this branch of industry, tensions between Jewish and Christian workers developed, for traditionally there was a division of labor: the Jews would weave with hand looms, while the Christian workers had the “privilege” of working with steam looms. When Jewish-owned textile factories gave this “privilege” to the Jews, ethnic tensions appeared. At times, the lure of this “privilege” prompted threats or even the use of force by both sides.<sup>64</sup> During such conflicts Christian workers allegedly threatened the Jews with pogroms. According to the officials, the conflicts also arose because the Christian workers refused to strike, although the Jews tried to force them to do so.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, it is likely that economic competition could have exacerbated the interethnic relations in some Belarusian provinces, primarily in the city of Belostok. Moreover, as mentioned above, during the conflicts in the textile factories, the Jews received threats that a pogrom would be organized. However, the available primary sources on the pogroms in these provinces (mainly in Grodno Province, especially in Belostok) do not allow one to confirm this hypothesis without conditions. The perpetrators’ actions and the verbal declarations made during the pogroms do not indicate economic motives. In fact, in many cases the pogrom-makers destroyed or stole Jewish property, but such actions were not necessarily economically motivated. In other words, economic competition *could have* exacerbated the relations between Christians and Jews at the beginning of the twentieth century in Belarus, but in most cases there had to be even more important reasons that encouraged the massive violence.

62 Abezgauz, *Razvitie promyshlennosti*, 40–42; Novik and Martsulia, eds., *Gistoryia Belarusi*, vol. 1, 321–322.

63 Usually Belarusian historians treat nineteenth-century Belarus in terms of contemporary or ethnic categories, and then the Belostok region is “left” to Polish historiography.

64 Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle*, 19–22; Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 153; Kahan, *Essays*, 39–40. This circumstance, as has been written in this section, is often mentioned in the reports of officials and in the testimonies of some witnesses: *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 55, 92–93, 133–136, 213.

65 Accusation, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 5, b. 69, l. 23.

Another manifestation of modernization was urbanization, and in this area we can see more distinct differences between the Lithuanian and Belarusian provinces than in the area of industrialization. The lowest population growth rate in urban areas was in the Lithuanian provinces, and while Vil'na Province may not have differed much from Grodno and Minsk, Kovno Province (with 14 percent growth) differed substantially from Mogilev and Vitebsk (with 69 and 48 percent, respectively). Moreover, in the Lithuanian cities there were significantly fewer newly arrived Christians who sought livelihoods and competed with the Jews for jobs. In 1897–1910 the number of non-Jews in the cities increased the least in Kovno Province. There it remained virtually the same, while in Mogilev Province it increased by almost 67 percent, and in Vitebsk Province by even 76 percent.<sup>66</sup> Thus, in Lithuania's cities at the beginning of the twentieth century, the previous relations between groups remained in effect; there were significantly fewer newly arrived, totally unknown persons. And one of the factors increasing the possibility of collective violence is the intensity of the relational distance. This means that the weaker these ties are—for example, the greater the number of newly arrived members of a foreign group—the greater the likelihood of collective violence.<sup>67</sup> Il'ia Gerasimov, who investigated crime in Vil'na in the late imperial period, stated that common interests closely connected people of various ethnic backgrounds and confessions and that there was no clear division between “our” and “their” modern, ethnically mobilized societies.<sup>68</sup> In other words, the relatively small percentage of the new population, helped prevent collective violence.

The factors discussed up to this point can explain the collective violence against Jews in certain areas, but not in all of Belarus. Therefore, we need to look for factors that could be detected across the whole of Belarus.

Information about many pogroms shows that religious-patriotic motives were very important to the perpetrators. First of all, it is significant that (as mentioned earlier) in Belarus, unlike in Lithuania, Orthodoxy prevailed. Presumably the Orthodox identified themselves much more with the Russian Empire and the existing political regime

66 V. Levin, “Socialiniai, ekonominiai, demografiniai,” 183.

67 Senechal de la Roche, “Collective Violence,” 107.

68 Gerasimov, *The Patriarchal Metropolis*.



and frequently were prepared to defend it from the revolutionaries, who were often identified with the Jews. It is also important to stress that in the 1903–1906 period, there were more pogroms in Mogilev Province, which had the highest percentage of Orthodox population, than in any other province in Belarus. Meanwhile, the Catholics, even if they did not feel friendly toward the Jews, did not have similar motivations. Speaking in favor of such an assumption is the fact that in the Catholic Kingdom of Poland, as far as is known, there were no pogroms in the period of the 1905 Revolution that local Catholics triggered. The crackdown on August 8–10, 1906, on the Jews in Siedlce, which claimed forty victims, according to the historiography, was organized by the army against real and alleged revolutionaries.<sup>69</sup> And in fact, the course of many pogroms in Belarus confirms the hypothesis that the perpetrators understood their actions as a patriotic mission.

It should be noted immediately that the pogroms discussed here should not be associated with Belarusian nationalism. As already noted, Belarusian nationalist ideology at the beginning of the twentieth century generated only a weak response from the masses, and it had no elements of antisemitic ideology.<sup>70</sup> Of course, the assertions in Belarusian historiography that Judeophobic attitudes were not typical of Belarusian peasants<sup>71</sup> are not convincing. During the pogroms occurring at the time of the 1905 Revolution, not only the urban but also the rural population, the vast majority of whom were ethnic Belarusians,<sup>72</sup> were very often mentioned as the perpetrators.

Some pogroms in Belarus, especially in the second half of October 1905, occurred in a similar pattern: the left-wing and liberal groups, among whom there were many Jews, greeted the publication of the October Manifesto with joy as their victory. The possibility that Jews would become citizens with equal rights, of course, might have disturbed much of Christian society. According to official reports, in one village in Vitebsk Province, the Jews suffered after one of them declar-

69 Rudnicki, "Pogrom Siedlecki," 18–39. Meanwhile, the left-wing press and the reports of officials sometimes indicated that the Poles were participating.

70 See Chapter Two of the book.

71 Bukhovets, "Natsii i etnokonfessional'nye gruppy," 249–262.

72 There are many archival sources confirming this statement, and the historiography also covers it: Mikhed'ko, "Antievreiskie pogromy," 88. Claire Le Foll has also criticized the aforementioned thesis of the Belarusian historians: Le Foll, "The Missing Pogroms," 167.

ed that “now that equality has been granted, both he and his children could be governors, district police chiefs, etc., and could be concerned with the affairs of the Orthodox Church.”<sup>73</sup>

Russian right-wing groups organized a response—patriotic demonstrations defending the existing regime and often still having a religious connotation (the Orthodox clergy participated and icons were carried). These manifestations can be understood as the right-wing Russian groups’ attempt to regain symbolic control of the space. The procession marching through the central streets of the city with the portraits of the tsar and icons effectively sent the message that the manifesto had changed nothing: the same political regime and Orthodoxy still ruled.<sup>74</sup> According to the reports of officials, Jewish revolutionaries shot at some of these demonstrations, and the demonstrators responded by starting pogroms.<sup>75</sup> And here what was important was not so much the fact of the shooting, but the *belief* in it. In this way, the pogroms began on October 21 in Orsha (Mogilev Province), on October 22 in Loev (Minsk Province, although there it was not shots that became the signal for a pogrom, but the rumor that the Jews had butchered a Christian), on October 23 in Polotsk (Vitebsk Province), and on the same day in Vitebsk and elsewhere.<sup>76</sup> A typical situation developed in Polotsk. There in the course of 1905, especially in the month of October, the upsurge in activity by radical Jewish groups increased discontent among conservative Russians. The chronicler of the Pokrovskaia Orthodox Church alleged that the Jews in Polotsk had

73 Report of the chief of the Administration of Gendarmes of Vitebsk Province to the Police Department, November 8, 1905, *GARF*, f. 102, 4 deloproizvodstvo, 1905 g., d. 2000, ch. 7, l. 25.

74 It was hard for some of the groups loyal to the empire to accept the idea that Jews could acquire the same rights as other imperial subjects. Such sentiment became increasingly evident in Vitebsk Province during the elections to the first Russian Duma, where in some areas leaflets were distributed, threatening pogroms if Jews were elected. In some places in this province Jews, despite having an absolute majority, feared pogroms and so elected Orthodox candidates: The letter of the Union for the Equal Rights of Jews in Russia-activist M.P. to the Central Committee of the Union, *RGIA*, f. 1565, op. 1, d. 43, l. 56, 57, 59.

75 Many of the pogroms in the Russian Empire in October 1905 followed such a scenario: Stepanov, *Chernaia sotnia*, 75.

76 Amanzholova, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 167, 172–73, 183; file “Predstavleniia prokurora Minskago okruzhnago suda po delu o evreiskom pogrome v m. Loeve Rechetskogo uezda,” *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 9, b. 412.

become totally audacious: they openly opposed the tsar and the empire, they tried to take control of the city from law-enforcement institutions, “they feel they are masters of the situation,” and they even dared to behave as they liked in an Orthodox church during the funeral of a murdered Orthodox demonstrator. Finally they fired at the patriotic demonstration, apparently trying to “end the manifestation and shamefully disperse its participants.” Such behavior, it is said, tried the patience of the loyal Polotsk residents.<sup>77</sup> The rage of the perpetrators in Loev increased upon hearing rumors that in Kiev the Jews destroyed a portrait of the tsar and an icon of Jesus, destroyed a monastery, and killed all the monks. Similar rumors were also spread in Orsha; here it was stated that the Jews desecrated Orthodox icons, devastated Orthodox churches, and killed peasants in nearby villages.<sup>78</sup> On January 13–14, 1906, according to the historical literature, the Russian Black Hundreds organized a pogrom in Gomel’ (Mogilev Province) against the Jews to avenge the murder of a policeman.<sup>79</sup> In Orsha some government officials allegedly incited the people to go and protect the legitimate government from the Poles and the Jews, who allegedly wanted to take power into their own hands.<sup>80</sup> The situation in Dvinsk also illustrates the hostility towards Jews as revolutionaries desiring to destroy the existing order; the Old Believers intended to take violence against the Jews because they destroyed a portrait of the tsar.<sup>81</sup>

The message perpetrators sent during these pogroms clearly shows that some of them acted out of religious-patriotic motives. In Orsha the peasants came to the city to “protect the tsar from the Jews”<sup>82</sup>; in Gomel’ the perpetrators shouted “beat the Jews and democrats”<sup>83</sup> as well as “here you go for your strikes.”<sup>84</sup> In Rechitsa (Minsk Province)

77 The yearbook of the Pokrovskaia Orthodox church in the city of Polotsk from 1868, *NIAB*, f. 2602, op. 1, d. 46, l. 25–29; Rohdewald, “*Vom Polocker Venedig*,” 488–497.

78 Surh, “Russia’s 1905 Era Pogroms,” 272.

79 Podbolotov, ““True-Russians’ against the Jews,” 206.

80 Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews*, 213.

81 Secret report of the chief of the Administration of Gendarmes of Vitebsk Province to the Police Department, October 29, 1905, *GARF*, f. 102, 4 deloproizvodstvo, 1905 g., d. 2000, ch. 7, l. 18.

82 Surh, “Russia’s 1905 Era Pogroms,” 272.

83 “Gomel’,” *Severo-zapadnyi golos* 32 (1906); “Žydu žudynės Homelyje [Slaughter of Jews in Gomel’],” *Vilniaus žinios* 14 (1906).

84 Witness evidence, *RGIA*, f. 1565, op. 1, d. 286, l. 65.

the perpetrators, beating Jews, also told them “here you go for [the slogan] ‘Down with Autocracy.’”<sup>85</sup> In Mogilev one colonel allegedly replied to Jewish appeals to defend them from the perpetrators by saying, “let the democrats help you,” and the conscripted Jews heard the police chief say: “You, democrats from abroad, kikes [*zhidy*], have to kiss the hands and feet of the Christians. You have been beaten and will be beaten.”<sup>86</sup>

The June 1906 pogrom in Belostok has similarities with these outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence. Here on June 1, two religious processions took place: an Orthodox one, commemorating the anniversary of the union between the Orthodox and Uniate churches, and a Catholic one, Corpus Christi. Although both the Orthodox and the Catholics participated in the pogrom,<sup>87</sup> it is worth drawing attention to its beginning. While there were shots at both processions, the pogrom began after someone (in the opinion of the perpetrators and the government, the Jews) fired at the Orthodox procession. Therefore the Orthodox presumably felt stronger and more able to defend their position. The available testimonies of witnesses mention that the perpetrators spoke Russian.<sup>88</sup> The insult to religious feelings during the pogrom was one of the major incentives to act. Among the perpetrators, rumors spread that the Jews not only shot at the procession but attacked it, took away the icons, scorned them, and beat the worshippers.<sup>89</sup> The pogrom-makers’ slogan “For the faith and the cross” (*za veru i krest*)<sup>90</sup> reflected the offended religious feelings.

The pogrom participants not only devastated or commandeered Jewish property but often brutally attacked the Jews. Moreover, the violence intensified: “it began in the morning with the beating of individuals; it gradually became more fierce; and after the arrival of the

85 Amanzholova, *Evreiskie pogromy*, 168.

86 Witness evidence, *RGIA*, f. 1565, op. 1, d. 286, l. 137.

87 However, some Polish newspapers hastened to announce that the Poles did not participate in the pogrom: Jerzy Kwef, “Nie chciemy krwi!” *Tygodnik Suwalski* 12 (1906): 1.

88 Witness evidence, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 5, b. 69, l. 97; “Ir vël žudynës... [Slaughter Once Again...],” *Vilniaus žinios* 118 (1906).

89 An undated report to the Vil’na governor general by senior special orders clerk P. Shkot, *LVIA*, 378, ps, 1906 m., b. 35, t. 1, l. 109. This information is also recorded in the report of a Duma commission: “Report of the Duma Commission,” 73, 76.

90 Witness evidence, *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 5, b. 69, l. 56.

southwest train, the killings began.”<sup>91</sup> The perpetrators were especially incited by the rumors that Jews were killing Christians, including Orthodox clerics, and desecrating icons. One rumor even proclaimed that the Jews intended to butcher all the Christians in Belostok.<sup>92</sup>

Part of the soldiers and officers’ goodwill toward the perpetrators during the Belostok events might have resulted at least partly from the propaganda that right-wing Russian groups disseminated in the military units in the spring of 1906.<sup>93</sup> This material claimed that the Zionists, who in this case were synonymous with Jewish revolutionaries (sic), were seeking to conquer Russia, turn it into a Jewish state, and destroy the Christian faith.<sup>94</sup> Even local law-enforcement leaders stated that the Jews, taking advantage of the June 1 religious processions, intended to attack the bank, the Treasury building, and the post office.<sup>95</sup> An Orthodox cleric, in testimony to the Duma committee,

91 Report by the Grodno District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil’na Palace of Justice, June 3, 1906, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 131. In Artur Markowski’s opinion, during the first day there was mostly looting, and during the second and third, there were killings: Markowski, “Promyshlennyi gorod,” 62. However, the material collected by the Duma commission does not support this version. According to that data, on the first day of the pogrom nineteen people who had been killed arrived at the Jewish hospital. On June 2 there were thirty-two, on June 3 there were sixteen, and on June 4 and 5 there was one on each day. There were fourteen additional victims between June 1 and 3, but officials were not able to determine more exactly the date of their deaths: *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 49–59.

92 The testimony of witnesses provided to the Duma committee, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 62, 68, 74, 78, 191.

93 Petrovsky-Shtern, *Jews in the Russian Army*, 232.

94 Copies of leaflets, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 58–89. Information on the distribution of these and similar leaflets in the military unit comes from the testimony of a witness, questioned by the Duma commission: *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 66; “Balstogės skerdynės [Slaughter in Belostok],” *Vilniaus žinios* 130 (1906) (here an article from the newspaper *Rech’* is reprinted). Representatives of the military denied that such leaflets were distributed among the soldiers: decoded telegram from Belostok, June 26, 1906, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 97.

95 Reports of Grodno District prosecutor to the prosecutor, Vil’na Palace of Justice, on June 21 and July 4, 1906, report of the prosecutor, Vil’na Palace of Justice, to the minister of justice on June 22, 1906, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 36, 41, 134. It was the same in Gomel’: there, before the pogrom, the rumor circulated that about 300 people, gathered by the synagogue, were preparing to attack the army: witness evidence, *RGIA*, f. 1565, op. 1, d. 286, l. 70.

said that he had received threatening letters for his sermons, in which he called for no violence against the Jews.<sup>96</sup> There were allegations that the antisemitic agitation before the pogrom in Belostok was carried out by an organization of “real Russians.”<sup>97</sup>

One should also stress that even within the same pogrom, the participants probably had different motivations. Some wanted to defend the Russian homeland from Jewish revolutionaries; others were primarily driven by their hurt religious feelings and perhaps had no interest in the whole political context; still others wanted to amuse themselves, or to seize others' property. The witnesses' descriptions of the perpetrators differed. Here an unidentified Orthodox believer testified to the Duma committee that those participating in the pogrom included “Poles and many railway employees; officials (of the state bank, post office, and telegraph), along with students (Russian commercial school students), led the perpetrators. The public distinguishes between Jews and revolutionaries.”<sup>98</sup> However, another source describes the perpetrators thus: “From the very beginning of the morning of June 2, suspicious persons again began to gather at the station. They immediately attracted attention by their dress and conduct. That day the pogrom-makers were totally different from the ones who beat the Jews the day before. On Friday, June 2, ‘the dregs,’ ‘a barefoot team,’ ragged and filthy persons, laborers, homeless wanderers, most of whom were drunk, beat the Jews.”<sup>99</sup>

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This brief and inevitably fragmented discussion of the anti-Jewish violence in Belarus not only clarifies why at the beginning of the twentieth century, unlike in the 1880s, anti-Jewish feelings became so much stronger here and so many pogroms, causing great losses of life, were

96 Testimony of an Orthodox clergyman, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 78.

97 Report from the chairman of the Duma commission A. Tokarskii, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 43.

98 Testimony of an Orthodox witness, given to the Duma commission, *RGIA*, f. 1405, op. 108, d. 21746, l. 79. This, most likely, was assumed to be on the first day of the pogrom. The testimonies of the witnesses collected by the Duma commission have to be treated as critically as any other source. This commission may well have provided only testimonies that were convenient to its interpretation.

99 *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 5, b. 69, l. 42.

instigated. It also, at least in part, explains the small scale of the anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania.

Although the older historiography asserted that the government organized the pogroms in the Russian Empire, as well as in Belarus, neither the arguments encountered in historiography nor the available primary sources make a convincing case that the pogroms were triggered by the central government. This, of course, does not mean that individual officers, police officials, or military officers and soldiers did not incite the pogroms, or join the perpetrators after pogroms started. There were cases in which the authorities tried to incite pogroms in Lithuania, but they were not successful. Thus, in any case, one has to look elsewhere for the reasons for the pogroms in Belarus. On the other hand, the relatively abundant assertions—even if by interested persons, periodicals, and political parties—about the involvement of government officials in the pogroms in the Belarusian provinces creates the image that there were more such people here than in the Lithuanian provinces. If this assumption is correct, then perhaps the activities of some Jewish revolutionaries—such as in Belostok, where anarchists, most of whom were Jews, in 1905–1906 engaged in intense terrorist activity directed not only against the authorities but also against some entrepreneurs—may have increased Antisemitism among government officials in Belarus. Another possible reason for the increase of interethnic tensions and especially of anti-Jewish attitudes in the late imperial period in Belarus is linked to the accelerated industrialization of some areas in this region, especially in the Belostok region. Here the competition for workplaces became fierce, which could have contributed to the growing Judeophobic mood. An additional factor at times was the geographical position of the Belarusian provinces. They had an administrative border with the region in which, both during 1881–1882 and the 1905 Revolution, there were the most cases of anti-Jewish acts of violence. Nevertheless, the influence of these circumstances (the geographical position of Belarus, the terrorist activities of some revolutionaries, and the somewhat limited industrialization) was felt in certain areas, but not throughout Belarus. Of course—as the events in 1881–1882 or 1905 indicate—very often, after one pogrom occurs, especially a large one, it becomes highly likely that the anti-Jewish violence will spread to nearby cities, towns, or villages. The main reason for the scale of anti-Jewish pogroms in the Belarusian provinces, especially in the second half of October 1905, has to do with the mobi-

lization of the masses using the ideas of Russian nationalism and imperial loyalty. The October 17, 1905, manifesto proclaiming the future constitution seriously alarmed groups of society loyal to the empire. One of the fears was that "the democrats," who were often identified with the Jews, not only would get equal rights but would begin to dictate their own terms, so they had to be "put in their place." This ideology was much more persuasive to the Orthodox Eastern Slavs (Russians and Belarusians) than the discriminated-against and disloyal Catholics (Lithuanians and Poles) in Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland, as well as the Latvians in Courland Province.

#### EASTERN GALICIA: A SIMILAR SITUATION TO THAT IN LITHUANIA

In Eastern Galicia under Austrian rule, as in Lithuania, scholars claim, there were very few pogroms. Historians mention only a few anti-Jewish pogroms, mostly in 1898 in Thuste, Barsztyn, Borszczow, and Przemyśl.<sup>100</sup> However, even these outbursts were often initiated not by local Ruthenians (Ukrainians) but by "Masurians," that is, immigrant Catholic workers from Western Galicia (namely, Poles). Jewish property was ransacked and, wherever possible, stolen, while in cases of violence against the person there is no evidence of attempts to kill Jews. In other words, these riots have more in common with the 1881–1882 pogroms in the Russian Empire than with those of 1903–1906. There were smaller cases of collective violence or at least heightened tensions in other periods. Often fights where opponents divided along ethno-confessional lines broke out in towns that had sprung up as a result of the development of the oil-extraction business. Particular panic arose in Jewish communities in 1903 when news reached Eastern

100 The dominant opinion in historical scholarship is that the pogroms in the Polish part of Galicia were caused by the advent of mass politics and the antisemitic agitation of certain Polish parties: Golczewski, *Polnisch-jüdische Beziehungen*, 60–84; Struve, "Gentry, Jews, and Peasants," 103–126; Unowsky, "Peasant Political Mobilization," 412–435. Granted, some scholars emphasize the influence of growing economic tensions: Stauter-Halsted, "Jews as Middleman Minorities," 39–59. The most detailed recent publication on the topic is Buchen, *Antisemitismus in Galizien*.



Galicia of the Kishinev pogrom, and rumors began to spread in this region too that accounts were about to be settled with Jews.<sup>101</sup>

Historians offer several explanations for the low level of anti-Jewish violence in Eastern Galicia. John-Paul Himka asserts that the reason lies in the politicization of the Ukrainian–Jewish conflict. In other words, the Ukrainian national movement impressed upon the peasantry, which formed the movement’s base, the idea that civilized means should be used to fight the Jews, namely that they should set up education and commercial institutions and boycott Jewish trade. Himka suggests that this propaganda was effective also because of its selection of methods.<sup>102</sup> Meanwhile Tim Buchen stresses the significance of the fact that Jews were numerically dominant in Eastern Galician towns and cities, while the Christian segment of urban and rural society was split along confessional lines (city dwellers were mostly Latin-Rite Catholics, while rural communities were mostly Eastern-Rite Uniates). As a result, Jews in Eastern Galicia answered violence with violence much more often. In other words, they felt much more confident than their coreligionists in Western Galicia, where Latin-Rite Catholicism dominated in both towns and villages.<sup>103</sup> That is what happened in July 1884 after the outbreak of what was known as the “Borysov Wars.” At that time, a small conflict erupted in Borysov, which was a growing center of the oil business, between a Christian laborer and a Jewish overseer. Later this developed into collective Christian working-class violence against Jewish homes in the Walanka suburb of Borysov, during which house doors and furniture were destroyed and the synagogue was attacked. But by the time the police arrived, the scene had changed: several thousand Jews from another company (numbers in the sources vary between 3,000 and 6,000) took revenge by ransacking the barracks of Christian laborers.<sup>104</sup>

These arguments hardly suffice to explain the small scale of anti-Jewish violence in Eastern Galicia. The fact that there was a strong antisemitic element in Ukrainian nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century (as Himka asserts) inevitably ought to have increased peasant antipathy towards Jews, and under certain circumstances (in cases of

101 Buchen, *Antisemitismus in Galizien*, 190–191, 330.

102 Himka, “Ukrainian–Jewish Antagonism,” 148. For a similar interpretation, see Grytsiak, *Prorok*, 343–344.

103 Buchen, *Antisemitismus in Galizien*, 191.

104 Frank, *Oil Empire*, 129; Grytsiak, *Prorok*, 292–293.

economic or political crisis, during pogroms in neighboring regions, or as rumors spread of blood libel) this could easily have developed into violence. The numerical superiority of Jews in urban areas could hardly have been an important circumstance, since in the Russian Empire, pogroms erupted even in some cities in the Pale where Jews constituted a majority. Furthermore, it is unlikely that this factor played a significant role in smaller towns, where peasants from outlying villages would gather on market day or during Christian holy days and thereby form a temporary majority. Thus, in Lithuania in 1900 and 1905, pogroms took place in small towns where Jews were the significant group of the permanent population. The identification of certain structural similarities between Eastern Galicia and Lithuania might help explain why the scale of anti-Jewish violence in both of these regions was so small.

We should begin with the differences between these two regions that were important for Christian–Jewish relations. There was a much more liberal political regime in the Habsburg Empire than in Russia. However, this factor does not seem to have been decisive. Autocratic Russia had areas like Ukraine with repeated and increasingly brutal pogroms, while in regions like Lithuania, pogroms were much rarer. The situation was similar in Austria–Hungary. There were hundreds of pogroms in Western Galicia in 1898 and only a few outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence in Eastern Galicia that year.

Another major difference is that Jews in the Habsburg Empire were equal citizens starting from 1848, and these rights were confirmed in 1867. As we know, their coreligionists in Russia had to wait until 1917 for this. Nevertheless, Jewish emancipation, as mentioned in the introduction to this study, did not always lead to a reduction in tension with the Gentile community. In fact, the opposite was often the case. The granting of equal rights to Jews might cause great discontent in a Christian community that still regarded them as pariahs. On the other hand, the obvious discrimination against Jews in the Romanov Empire, as we have noted, led people to believe rumors that the authorities allowed even the beating or killing of Jews.

These two factors are not what kept anti-Jewish violence in Eastern Galicia on a small scale because, as noted earlier, a wave of violence swept Western Galicia in 1898, but Jewish rights were the same throughout the province.

Another important difference between Lithuania and Eastern Ga-

Galicia was that the Ukrainians in the Russian Empire were involved in pogroms both in the early 1880s and at the beginning of the twentieth century; news of these events reached Galicia easily. Thus this “encouragement” was not in itself sufficient to induce similar behavior among peasants in Eastern Galicia.

However, there are important similarities in Jewish–Gentile relations in these regions. Like Lithuania, Galicia was a backward agrarian land. The Habsburg authorities had consciously decided not to modernize this border region. Likewise, the Polish elite that had dominated this land from 1867 was not overly interested in improving the local economy. Thus, the area had no large industrial centers. Inter-ethnic conflicts in small towns and villages were less dangerous than such clashes in industrial centers. The ethno-confessional division of labor was similar in both regions too: Ruthenians (Ukrainians) worked mainly on the land, while Jews worked in areas that might be called intermediary, and Poles formed the gentry and the civil service. The number of Germans in the administration, unlike that of Russians in Lithuania, was slight. Admittedly, this ethno-confessional distribution of labor was not so strict by the time the empire fell. Like Lithuanians, Ukrainians set up more and more cooperatives and attempted to out-compete Jewish traders. At the same time, the number of Jews acquiring land also increased. The number of Jews involved in agriculture *throughout* Galicia by the outbreak of World War I may have been as high as 13.6 percent, although some researchers put the figure lower.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that there were many more such Jews in Galicia, including eastern parts of the province, than in Lithuania (4.4 percent). Unlike Russia, Austria–Hungary abolished restrictions on Jewish acquisition of land. Of course, both sides attempted to defend their “territory.” Peasants in particular took action against Jewish money-lenders.<sup>106</sup>

There was not just a similar ethno-confessional distribution of labor in Lithuania and Eastern Galicia. The percentage of Jews in the,

105 Wróbel, “The Jews of Galicia.” At the end of the century, Jews comprised 40–44 percent of the population of small and large towns in Vil’na, Kovno, and Suvalki Provinces, although there were towns where they made up as much as 74 percent of the local population (such as in Šakiai): Medišauskienė, “Laikas–erdvė–žmogus,” 99–100.

106 Himka, “Ukrainian–Jewish Antagonism,” 114–115; Himka, *Galician Villagers*, 158–175; Grytsiak, *Prorok*, 342–343.

population was also similar (13, 14, and 10 percent in Vil'na, Kovno and Suvalki Provinces, respectively, compared to 13.4 percent in Eastern Galicia).<sup>107</sup> Jews were the dominant population in small and large towns.

The Jewish view of both Lithuanian and Ruthenian peasant cultures was in principle the same. Acculturation and assimilation took place with regard to the dominant cultures. In Galicia it was German at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Polish from the middle of that century. In Lithuania there were weak pro-Polish tendencies at first, which were replaced after 1863 by increasingly pro-Russian attitudes. Peasant ethno-culture was not attractive to Jews, and thus no community developed that identified as Ruthenians (or Lithuanians) "of the Mosaic faith."

It is likely that another important factor was the place Jews held in the hierarchy of enemies of the largest non-dominant ethnic group, be it Ruthenian or Lithuanian. Although previous authors have stressed the antisemitic component of the Ukrainian national movement, more recently the emphasis has been on collaboration between Jews, primarily Zionists, and the Ukrainian national movement in the early twentieth century. The first such case dates to 1873, when the Liberal Jewish Election Committee concluded a semi-clandestine agreement with the Ukrainian Rada Ruska on collaboration in elections to the Austrian Reichsrat. This tendency became even clearer at the beginning of the twentieth century alongside the growth in Zionist influence. In the 1907 elections to the Reichsrat, Ukrainians and Jews formed an electoral alliance that benefited both: Jewish representatives from several constituencies joined the Liberal faction, rather than the Polish faction, in parliament. Admittedly, as in Lithuania's Kovno Province during elections to the Russian Duma, this was more a marriage of convenience than a sincere alliance based on a shared political program. Moreover, during the 1911 elections in Austria-Hungary, there was no such alliance. As in Lithuania, the basis of this pragmatic agreement was the anti-Polish sentiment shared by both groups: the Zionists, who stood against pro-Polish tendencies and acculturation on the "Jewish street," and the Ukrainians. For the leaders of the national movements in Lithuania (except, perhaps, the clericalists) and Ukraine alike, Jewish nationalists fighting for their own

107 Wróbel, "The Jews of Galicia."

national interests and against assimilatory tendencies, and having no territorial claims in Galicia, represented a lesser evil than Polonized Jews, let alone the Poles.<sup>108</sup> It is clear that such an agreement was reached only in 1907, but it is probable that Polish domination in Galicia (especially after 1867) and Polish unwillingness to accept the demands of the Ukrainian national movement confirmed the Poles' position in the hierarchy of Ukrainian national enemies and slightly neutralized anti-Jewish sentiments.

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Thus, an examination of the situation in Eastern Galicia further supports the conclusions we drew when comparing the situation in Lithuania and Belarus: that an agrarian economy and slow modernization, which left intact the old ethnic division of labor, created fewer preconditions for anti-Jewish violence than rapid economic modernization did. Another likely reason for the relative lack of anti-Jewish violence is that ethnic groups, or their elites, felt they had more important enemies than Jews.

#### CONFLICTS OVER LANGUAGE IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY SERVICES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN LITHUANIA

Other ethnic or ethno-confessional groups, not just Jews, became the targets of collective violence in nineteenth-century Lithuania. In a previous chapter we noted cases where Catholic peasants threatened to settle accounts with Protestants and Old Believers at the beginning of the twentieth century. One particular type of confrontation—conflicts between Lithuanians and Poles over the language to be used in the supplementary services of the Catholic churches—deserves special attention, because it involves not single events but repeated conflicts in various Lithuanian parishes over many years that often turned into collective violence. The Lithuanian public figure and historian Mykolas Biržiška compared these two types of conflict. He regarded these Lithuanian–Polish conflicts over the language as much worse than anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania: “On rare occasions on

108 Grytsiak, *Prorok*, 344; Shanes and Petrovsky-Shtern, “An Unlikely Alliance,” 483–505.

market day or during a fair, after a customer fell into a more heated argument with a trader, tipsy servants and their masters would apply their fists to an irate Jew ('to teach him a lesson') or smash his windows. But all this was not so dramatic as it might seem to someone from afar, and was somewhat less significant than fights between Lithuanians and 'Poles' in some parish in Alytus or elsewhere over Lithuanian and Polish sermons, hymns, or Gospel readings."<sup>109</sup> We can only guess why these fights over the language used in church seemed worse to Biržiška. Perhaps it was because more was known about this in the Lithuanian community than about anti-Jewish violence; perhaps it was because Lithuanians suffered in such cases.

Indeed, conflicts in churches or just outside them were quite a common occurrence in Lithuania. What may have been the first such language conflicts took place late in 1889.<sup>110</sup> In 1908 the governor of Suvalki said such encounters between Poles and Lithuanians were a chronic occurrence.<sup>111</sup>

This section shall deal with cases where such conflicts arose, and later we shall attempt to explain how collective violence in Catholic churches differed from pogroms and what supplementary evidence such a comparison offers concerning interethnic relations.<sup>112</sup>

Catholic supplementary services included Gospel readings, sermons, litanies, the Rosary, Lenten laments, processions, and May-, June-, and October Devotions (to Our Lady, the Sacred Heart, and the Rosary, respectively). While Latin was used for the Mass, the vernacular was used for supplementary services. In Lithuania, even in those places where an absolute majority of the congregation was Lithuanian, Polish would be used quite often on such occasions. At the end of the nineteenth century, more and more priests were influenced by the ideology of modern nationalism and, taking notice of the lan

109 Biržiška, *Lietuvių tautos kelias*, 37. Quotation marks are put around the ethnonym "Pole" according to the logic of Lithuanian nationalism, which claims that there were no Poles in Lithuania, only Polonized Lithuanians.

110 Ūdrėnas, "Book, Bread, Cross, and Whip," 435.

111 Ibid., 438; Weeks, "Lithuanians, Poles and the Russian Imperial Government," 297; report on Suvalki Province for 1908, *AGAD*, KWGG, 6478, k. 35.

112 Conflicts between Lithuanians and Poles over what language to use in the supplementary services in Catholic churches have attracted wide scholarly attention: Ūdrėnas, "Book, Bread, Cross, and Whip," 426–451; Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai*, 332–377; Katilius, "Pridėtinių pamaldų kalba," 11–58.

guage used by the majority of their congregations in everyday life, began to use Lithuanian. Sometimes the spread of the use of Lithuanian in church did not prompt any negative reaction from the Polish-speaking faithful, but in some cases complaints were sent en masse to the hierarchy, and clergy settled disputes. However, some conflicts escalated into collective violence.

It is not easy to describe the course of such violence or even determine which side was the aggressor and which the victim. The Lithuanian press blamed the Poles, while the latter, of course, blamed the Lithuanians. Even so, the more important conflicts can be discussed in general terms at least. The first one detailed below is that of the Diocese of Seiny.<sup>113</sup>

On February 16, 1896, at Lazdijai, as the influential Lithuanian national movement activist Grinius wrote in *Ūkininkas*, a conflict began when Lithuanians got angry with Poles for interrupting their Lithuanian hymn. Verbal abuse after the service led to a fight in which the Lithuanians initially gained the upper hand. However, towards evening, when most Lithuanians headed home to their villages, the Poles dominated.<sup>114</sup> Meanwhile, on September 2 of the same year, according to Polish parishioners, Lithuanians threw stones at the walls and windows of Polish houses and caused considerable damage.<sup>115</sup> Another complaint claims that Lithuanians beat up Poles not only inside and outside church but also in the town's streets.<sup>116</sup> On October 26, 1896, at Simnas, only police intervention prevented a fight from breaking out. In 1899 fighting erupted at Veisiejai, which Bishop Antanas Baranauskas blamed on Lithuanians and local landowners. On October 17, 1899, several Lithuanians armed with revolvers threatened to kill some Poles; on October 20 greater disturbances were avoided only because a unit of Cossacks unexpectedly appeared in town;

113 This account of events in the diocese of Seiny relies mostly on the work of Algimantas Katilius. All dates about events in Seiny Diocese are presented according to the Gregorian calendar.

114 Kerėpla [Kazys Grinius], "Lazdijai," *Ūkininkas* 10 (1896): 78–79. This article also states that the Poles enlisted the aid of Jews and Russians. That statement should be regarded with great caution, especially as other sources are not available.

115 Request from the group of Poles to the minister of interior, January 12, 1898, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 2, d. 73, l. 10–11.

116 Request from the group of Poles to the empress, February 15, 1898, *ibid.*, l. 6–7.

the Lithuanians had no intention of obeying local policemen. On December 19 of that year, Poles were beaten up in church and driven out of the building.<sup>117</sup> In 1903 Poles prevented the curate, Antanas Staniukynas, from saying the rosary in the church at Berznykai, and in the end he was transferred to another parish. Although the same year the local parish priest, Tomas Kedys, warned that bloody confrontations might arise after the introduction of Lithuanian, in 1904 the diocese's administrator, Juozapas Antanavičius, did allow Lithuanian to be used. After Lithuanians began singing a hymn, Poles began to sing as well. Finally, after one service on August 29, 1904, Poles pelted Lithuanians with stones, and a more serious incident was prevented only by police intervention. On another occasion the outcome was more painful. As *Vilniaus žinios* reported, eighteen Lithuanians were injured when attacked by Poles: "four Lithuanians emerged almost dead with cracks on the back of their heads."<sup>118</sup> On August 27, 1906, a fight began in church at Kalvarija, and more than a dozen people were injured. The Lithuanian press asserted that in this case, the Poles had help from soldiers. Later the Lithuanian press blamed the Poles for smashing windows in the houses of a priest and an organist.<sup>119</sup> Official correspondence mentions that the fight spread into the street.<sup>120</sup> Conflicts continued in this church in later years; first one side and then the other would gain the upper hand. One of the largest incidents took place on February 22, 1909, when Lithuanians attacked Poles in church.<sup>121</sup> On May 5, 1907, a fight occurred in Liubavas.

117 Copy of the report from the chief of the Administration of the Suvalki Province Gendarmerie to the Police Department, November 15, 1899; report from the Warsaw governor general to the interior minister, January 16, 1900, *ibid.*, l. 15–17, 25. Baranauskas did not dramatize this incident. According to the bishop of Seiny's abovementioned March 3, 1900, letter to Sipiagin, Lithuanians "drove the Poles out of church": *ibid.*, l. 29–30.

118 Valentas [?], "Kodėl uždarė Beržininko bažnyčią [Why Berznykai Church Was Closed]," *Vilniaus žinios* 81 (1905); *Politicheskii obzor*, 52.

119 Lietuvis [?], "Kalvarija," *Šaltinis* 22 (1907): 344.

120 Reports of the chief of the Mariampol' and Kalvarija District Gendarmerie to the Police Department, August 27, 1906, and October 8, 1907; report from the Suvalki governor to the Police Department, February 8, 1908, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 2, d. 73, l. 43, 119, 146–147.

121 Report of the chief of the Administration of the Suvalki Province Gendarmerie to the Police Department, February 28, 1909; report from the Suvalki governor to the Department of Religious Affairs of the Foreign Confessions, April 19, 1909, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 2, d. 79, l. 51, 68.



According to the Lithuanian version (which the local parish priest gave), a gang of fifty Poles attacked the house where church servants lived when more than a dozen Lithuanians were in the sacristan's quarters. The Polish interpretation of events given by *Tygodnik Suwalski* said that Lithuanians in this house beat up the leader of the Polish parishioners and his fellow Poles sped to his aid.<sup>122</sup> At Vištytis in 1909, after several decades of pleading by Lithuanians, regulations were issued governing the use of Polish and Lithuanian, much to the dismay of Poles, who gathered outside the presbytery and shouted: "We shall not let Lithuanians sing in church; just let them try and we will throw them out; we will beat them up and spill their blood, but we will not surrender our church; the church is ours, our land is Polish, the presbytery is ours, the cemetery is ours, and we will not let Lithuanians use the cemetery." During one incident only border guards managed to subdue the mob, which refused to obey local officials. Official correspondence notes that not only was there violence in church, but also, on one or two occasions, stones were thrown and windows broken at night. On one such occasion a Lithuanian shot and killed a Pole with his revolver when he could not tell who had gathered outside his house.<sup>123</sup>

Both the Lithuanian and Polish press reported in detail several incidents that took place in the Vil'na diocese. In this sense the Butrimonys case is typical because the Lithuanian press blamed Poles for the disturbance: "Soon the arguments turned into fistfights. Antagonized by Poles, Lithuanians finally lost their patience. Someone shouted: They want to drive us out of our homes as well as church! Men! Are we really going to surrender? And annoyed, irritated, and losing their patience, Lithuanians leaped at their foe so strongly that even if there had been more of the enemy, they would have overcome them all and driven them all out. Blood spilled on both sides."<sup>124</sup> The

122 Emde [?], "Z Suwalskiego," *Tygodnik Suwalski* 20 (1907): 5; Kazimierz Zaleski, "Polsko-litewskie waśnie w parafji lubowskiej," *ibid.*, 25 (1907): 5–6; Bezstronny [?], "Jeszcze w sprawie lubowskiej," *ibid.*, 26 (1907): 6–7.

123 Report of the chief of the Administration of the Suwalki Province Gendarmerie to the Police Department, March 27, 1910; report from the vice-director of the Chancellery of the Warsaw governor general to the Department of Religious Affairs of the Foreign Confessions, May 5, 1910, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 2, d. 79, l. 118–119, 124–127.

124 J. Gintautas, "Kaip Butrimoniečiai gynėsi nuo lenkų. 1906–1907 metais [How People in Butrimonys were Defending Themselves from Poles in 1906–1907]," *Viltis* 48 (1912). See also Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai*, 365.

Polish press asserted that Lithuanians, led by the parish priest, organized a “pogrom” for Poles here, after which eight Poles suffered “bleeding wounds,” and the number of those slightly injured was considerably higher.<sup>125</sup> In 1910 pilgrims singing in Lithuanian were attacked near the church in Joniškis; one woman was injured seriously.<sup>126</sup> According to *Viltis*, the newspaper that reported most on ethnic relations in the Vil’na diocese, in Eišiškės in 1912 Poles taught Lithuanians “a lesson” not inside or outside the local church but in the town: “On market day, December 22, Polish lads roamed the town in gangs, picking on Lithuanians, looking for a reason to beat them up. I myself saw how several Poles beat the pate of a farmer from Gilviniškės. They came up to him and said, ‘So you want to bring *Litva* into church, do you?’ and he replied, ‘You pray in your way, so why can’t we Lithuanians pray in Lithuanian?’ ‘So that’s what you have to say,’ said one Pole. ‘Beat him up.’ They hit him in the head. The Lithuanian barely managed to fight his way out and hide.” The same newspaper asserts that Lithuanians had received threats such as “Just let those Lithuanians try and sing in Lithuanian in church and they’ll be goners.” One Lithuanian woman who was caught in town escaped being beaten up by claiming she was Polish.<sup>127</sup> In Radun’, where Lithuanians were clearly a minority in the parish, a conflict turned serious. The spread of the use of Lithuanian in church met with resistance from local Poles. In 1911 Poles checked the prayer books of Lithuanians attending church, yelling that they would spill blood if needed to stop the priest from giving his sermon in Lithuanian in the churchyard.<sup>128</sup> In the summer of 1912, Lithuanians were beaten after services. According to *Viltis*, the mob tore and trampled on Lithuanian prayer books and threatened on more than one occasion to kill their opponents.<sup>129</sup>

This brief account of conflicts in Catholic churches has been given in order to present certain generalizations and compare these with

125 J.M. [?], “Litwoman-pogromca,” *Dziennik wileński* 77 (1907).

126 Ūdrėnas, “Book, Bread, Cross, and Whip,” 444.

127 V.M. [?], “Lietuvių padėjimas Vilniaus vyskupijoje [The Situation of Lithuanians in the Vilnius Diocese],” *Viltis* 2 (1912). See also Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai*, 364.

128 Report from N. Sabaliauskas to K. Mikhalkevich, August 8, 1911, *LVIA*, f. 604, ap. 1, b. 10204, l. 218–219; Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai*, 421.

129 “Kraujo praliejimas Rodunio bažnyčioje (nuo savo korespondento) [Bloodshed in Radun’ Church (From Our Own Correspondent)],” *Viltis* 87 (1912); Merkys, *Tautiniai santykiai*, 422.

anti-Jewish pogroms. When discussing the reasons for collective violence, we can see certain similarities in both cases. As we have stated, political crisis or the collapse of official authority creates favorable conditions for collective violence against Jews. The collective violence that broke out in Catholic churches was not the same as an anti-Jewish pogrom. In those cases there was no serious opposition to officials when they sought to restore order, although there were cases when local officials were not obeyed. Here we do not see any intensification of such conflicts during the 1905 Revolution, and it is unlikely that these incidents were closely associated with a collapse in the authority of public officials. However, this case involves the collapse in the authority of an institution with a different kind of power, namely, the Catholic Church, or rather, the Catholic clergy. As *Viltis* reported after the incident in Radun', "here it seems as though no laws work any more, be they of God, Church, or State."<sup>130</sup> The conflicting parties were inclined to obey only their own clergy, while priests defending the stance of the opposing side could also suffer. Especially active Lithuanian priests such as Stanislovas Stakelė were occasionally beaten up.<sup>131</sup> An even more common behavior was the disruption of services held in the "wrong" language by yelling or singing in the "right" language, which also showed disrespect to a particular priest.

Opponents would receive threats as disputes escalated over the use of a particular language, just as Jews would receive threats before a pogrom. In both cases death threats might be made. There were more such threats than those cited here. The Poles who beat up Father Stakelė threatened "to wipe Lithuanians from the face of the earth."<sup>132</sup> Although people were killed and injured during conflicts in churches,<sup>133</sup> as with pogroms, it is hard to find any deliberate intentions to kill.

All the same, it is obvious that in both these cases, the basic reasons for the escalation of interethnic tension and its development into collective violence are different. In the case of pogroms in Lithuania, nationalism, especially its ethno-cultural aspect, certainly played no

130 J.K. [?], "Kas čia kaltas? [Who is Responsible Here?]," *Viltis* 90 (1912).

131 File "Perepiska s Vilenskimi politseiskim upravleniem i upravliaiushchim kant-seliariei Vilenskogo general-gubernatora po delu o nanesenii poboiev zhiteliami-poliakami seleniia Biniakoni ksendzu-litovtsu Stokialo," *LVIA*, f. 446, ap. 6, b. 906.

132 *Ibid.*, l. 4.

133 During the Lithuanian attack in Vištytis on June 9, 1909, the attacker was shot.

major role, whereas conflicts in Catholic churches were conditioned by the increasing nationalization of the masses. Although sometimes both sides (especially the Lithuanian one) appealed to the importance of confessionalization (they asserted that the faithful should understand what was being said during services), it is obvious that the idea of nationhood played a key role in the origin and exacerbation of such conflicts. As we know, the nationalism of non-dominant ethnic groups in Central and Eastern Europe was ethno-linguistic, and language was regarded as the basic criterion for defining belonging to a given nation. There were not many institutions controlled by new nationalisms that could assist in the nationalization of the masses. Until the 1905 Revolution, someone who wished to learn Polish or Lithuanian had to attend an underground school. Admittedly, this changed after 1905, and state schools appeared where Polish and/or Lithuanian were taught as a subject. Aside from schools, another institution that could have a marked effect on acculturation or even assimilation processes was the Church. Both Lithuanian and Polish nationalists understood this perfectly well, and among their ranks an important role was played by priests. Gradually, the idea of a national, Lithuanian-speaking Lithuania or Polish-speaking Poland spread among the masses. Reflections of this ideology can be seen clearly in the conflicts described here: at Vištytis, Poles said they would not permit Lithuanian services because the town was “Polish land,” while in Eišiškės they asked why the Lithuanians wanted to introduce *Litva* (*Litwa* [Lithuania]) in Polish). Lithuanians attempted to mobilize people in Butrimonys, stating that after the Poles had driven them out of church, they might try to drive them out of their very homes. In other words, confirmation of the use of one or the other language in church symbolized who dominated a given parish and hence its belonging to one of the imagined national territories, namely Lithuania or Poland.

Another important difference between these conflicts and pogroms is the fact that in the case of collective violence over languages in church, it was not clear in advance which group would introduce its own “order” and which would fall victim to the process. Although different sources often presented opposing interpretations of events—that is, Polish newspapers would report that Lithuanians committed the violence, while Lithuanian newspapers would blame that Poles—there were obviously some cases where Lithuanians were the victims and others where they were in the majority and Poles suffered most.

This means that cases of conflicts in church involve a situation in which both groups thought they had a right to introduce order by force: “the Poles regarded themselves as the privileged ruling class”<sup>134</sup> and the Lithuanians “regard themselves as masters of the parish because of their numerical superiority.”<sup>135</sup> It is no coincidence that these physical confrontations were often called “fights.” It is difficult for us to imagine a similar situation in Jewish-Christian relations. Of course, there were cases in which Jews collectively engaged in violence against Christians who had inflicted some real or imagined harm on them. However, in all known cases they fought specific Gentiles who had taken part in a given conflict. There is no record of them ever committing violence against Christians as such. They realized perfectly well that in a state where they were one of the most discriminated-against ethnic groups and where society at large was rife with Judeophobic sentiment, any acts of collective violence on their part might quickly rebound on them. In other words, Jews seem to have “known their proper place.”

Another clear difference between the pogroms and church conflicts lies in the targets of the violence. In the case of pogroms, the whole Jewish community suffered as a rule; in other words, the principle of collective responsibility was applied. In the case of conflicts over the language issue, most often specific people suffered from the violence, whether in churches, churchyards, or elsewhere. These people were, as a rule, directly involved in the disturbance (through agitation, singing, interrupting the priest, shouting insults, and so on). It could not have been otherwise. In Lithuania it was not so easy to differentiate between Lithuanians and Poles. The long-term domination of the Polish language in both higher culture and the Catholic Church made this language not only the language of the elite but also the language of prayer. To put it plainly, most Lithuanians knew Polish prayers, and in ethnically mixed areas, people who regarded themselves as Poles could also speak at least a little Lithuanian. In the end we should not forget that at the turn of the twentieth century, mass nationalization processes were far from complete. Thus, to paraphrase Eugene Weber,

134 The conclusion drawn by the Kalvarija policeman concerning the fighting in church in 1909 involving Lithuanians and Poles, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 2, d. 79, l. 69.

135 Report by the governor of Suvalki to the Police Department, February 8, 1908, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 2, d. 79, l. 71.

it was unclear whether the peasants would become Poles or Lithuanians. For this reason, collective violence in these cases very seldom spread beyond the church or its surroundings.<sup>136</sup> The Eisiškės events as described in *Viltis* are very typical in this respect: one Lithuanian woman escaped attack because she said she was Polish (and of course she had to say so in Polish); one Lithuanian man had to flee from a mob because he openly supported the use of Lithuanian in church. Thus attackers had to “question” their victims before attacking them, because it would be almost impossible to distinguish between a Lithuanian and a Pole otherwise. No such problems usually arose in identifying a Jew.

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The Polish-language newspaper *Dziennik wileński* described the fracas in Butrimonys as a Lithuanian pogrom against Poles.<sup>137</sup> This term, as we know, is used most commonly to describe collective violence against Jews. Indeed, there were certain similarities between these types of collective violence. First of all, as has been remarked repeatedly in sociological and historical studies, favorable conditions for mob rule develop when there is a political crisis. Admittedly, the Polish–Lithuanian disputes involved the collapse of a spiritual rather than a secular authority. In short, the ideology of nationalism became more important than religious authorities. On the other hand, another similarity discussed here contradicts certain generalizations drawn by sociologists:<sup>138</sup> threats of dire consequences do not have to develop into murderous violence.

Nevertheless, the differences between these two forms of violence are more important than the similarities. First of all, the reasons behind these acts of collective violence differ. Ethno-linguistic nationalism was an obvious factor in mobilizing groups during language

136 One such case was Vištytis, where the windows of houses belonging to the Lithuanian hymn singers were smashed. *Tygodnik Suwalski* reported that Lithuanians in Kalvarija attacked nationally-minded Poles: Bezstronny[?], “Jeszcze w sprawie lubowskiej,” *Tygodnik Suwalski* 27 (1907): 7.

137 In Kalvarija, apparently, the Poles also threatened to organize a “pogrom” against Lithuanians: report by the administrator of the Diocese of Sejny to the Department of Religious Affairs of the Foreign Confessions, September 23 (October 6), 1906, *RGIA*, f. 821, op. 2, d. 73, l. 74.

138 D. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*, 87.

conflicts in churches, which was not the case during the pogroms against Jews in Lithuania. Moreover, in pogroms the target of the violence is a whole group, while in Lithuanian–Polish conflicts the mob attacked specific people. Thus Senechal de la Roche is correct to say that violence against a (whole) group is more likely when there is greater social polarization, such as in the Jewish–Gentile relations covered here, and when social polarization is less, collective violence against specific persons can be expected.<sup>139</sup>

139 Senechal de la Roche, “Collective Violence,” 115.

## Conclusion

This research has revealed that during the long nineteenth century, there were approximately ten pogroms in Lithuania, not counting those organized at the beginning of World War I by Russian army units. However, even though the scale of collective violence was small, it does raise questions as to why and how violence took place.

One of the readily identifiable reasons for the rise in Judeophobic sentiment in Lithuania was news of pogroms in other parts of the empire. This information strengthened an existing conviction that beating up Jews and destroying their property was permitted, and this encouraged pogroms. Granted, this “external effect” was most likely smaller than in the southern regions of Belarus, which bordered on Kiev and Chernigov Provinces, where during the 1905 Revolution there were the most pogroms. There anti-Jewish violence was sometimes provoked by people arriving from areas where pogroms had already taken place. In any case this factor cannot have been a determining one. In order for interethnic tensions to strengthen or even develop into collective violence, local preconditions must already exist.

For a long time, historians blamed the Russian authorities for provoking certain pogroms. However, in none of the cases discussed in this book does the available evidence confirm that charge. On the contrary, the evidence shows that in 1881–1882, after pogroms began in southern parts of Russia, the authorities in St. Petersburg sent out instructions to halt similar incidents and local officials made every effort to prevent collective violence against Jews. Of course, this does not mean that representatives of the central or local authorities had no influence over the spread of Judeophobic sentiment. First and foremost, anti-Jewish discrimination in the Russian Empire strengthened the common people’s conviction that this ethno-confessional group in effect had no rights. Thus it was not difficult to believe rumors that the tsar had issued a decree allowing violence against Jews. Second, the reluctance to punish perpetrators also confirmed the belief that violence against Jews was permitted. Third, there is considerable contemporary evidence that in the early twentieth century, certain army



officers, policemen, and civil servants whipped up Judeophobic sentiment in Lithuania. However, their efforts, unlike in other areas of the Pale of Settlement, met with little response. Fourth, sometimes even the authorities' attempts to combat Judeophobic superstitions could form preconditions for pogroms. Until the end of the nineteenth century, local officials very often obviously supported allegations of blood libel. Meanwhile, during incidents in 1886, 1892, 1900, and 1908, we find no clear support from the authorities for accusations against Jews. Thus for a long time during the nineteenth century, at least some of the imperial authorities contributed in one way or another to the functioning of superstition in Lithuanian society. Such an official position gave hope to common people that justice would be done and thus that there was no need to take the law into their own hands. In the late imperial period, when some officials began to act more rationally in certain cases when examining alleged incidents of blood libel, more preconditions formed for pogroms, because peasants believed that no one was prepared to "protect" them from Jews.

The most important reason for collective anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania was religious Judeophobia. The superstition that Jews used Christian blood in their rituals was deeply rooted in the Lithuanian countryside.

Economic motives also intensified Judeophobic sentiment. However, there were no particular economic crises affecting collective anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania. At the turn of the twentieth century, when some Christians attempted to enter "Jewish" commercial niches, new sources of tension arose when people began to regard Jews not only as immoral middlemen but also dangerous rivals. In antisemitic texts in the Lithuanian press, economic motives dominate. Thus economic grievances against Jews spread thoroughly and undoubtedly increased antipathy towards them, but it is hard to find a direct link between these and outbreaks of violence. Only in the case of a few pogroms are there certain indications that the motives of the perpetrators may have been economic, but these were certainly not the dominant factors.

Equally, the role of local nationalism, primarily Lithuanian nationalism, may have generated Judeophobic sentiment on a certain scale. However, as our research has shown, the nationalist influence on the rise of collective violence was minimal. In the Lithuanian press at the turn of the twentieth century, antisemitic texts sharply declined, re-

maintaining only in clericalist publications. Furthermore, the need for allies in Lithuanians' struggle against Poles and Russians led to the formation of a pragmatic alliance between Jews and Lithuanians during elections to the imperial Duma. A similar situation may have developed in eastern Galicia, where there were also very few pogroms and the Ruthenians (Ukrainians) had more important enemies than Jews, namely the Poles. The anti-tsarist nature of Lithuanian, Polish, and Belarusian nationalism was the most important difference between Lithuania and many other parts of the Pale of Settlement during the 1905 Revolution, when a wave of pogroms swept through the Russian Empire, including Belarus, motivated in large part by a desire to punish the Jews for being revolutionaries. Here a more general conclusion might be drawn: nationalism among non-dominant national groups in the Russian Empire was less inclined to generate collective anti-Jewish violence than those groups that could identify with the empire; the Catholic-dominated Kingdom of Poland also stands out for its small number of pogroms throughout the long nineteenth century.

Besides the structural changes outlined here (political crises that allowed people to take the law into their own hands; economic modernization, which drew Christians into "Jewish" trades, thereby creating competition; pogroms in other parts of the empire), specific circumstances that led to pogroms are no less important. Analysis of pogroms in Lithuania has shown that domestic conflicts may have been supplementary or even very important triggers, as could some disaster for which Jews might be blamed. During these incidents some Christians saw a danger to certain basic values, such as self-respect (the blood libel or the cases when Jews fought a Christian in self-defense), property (as when Jews were accused of arson in Dusetos in 1905), and security (to some extent blood libel cases). This generated a corresponding emotional response, such as indignation, hatred, and fear. The desire for revenge led people to take action.

All pogroms in Lithuania took place in small towns. The fact that no pogrom took place in a large city was one factor protecting Lithuanian Jews from larger outbreaks of ethnic violence. Shtetl-type pogroms had one more exceptional characteristic. Usually most of the perpetrators or members of the crowd watching the pogrom were peasants from local villages who had come to town for a religious holy day, a Sunday, or a market day. In the evening they had to go home, where farm work awaited them. Thus anti-Jewish violence in small

towns lacked the conditions to continue for several days; usually it lasted for a few hours.

Antipathy towards Jews was undoubtedly very strong in historical Samogitia, especially in Shavli, Tel'shi, and Ponevezh Districts. Here Jews were accused of blood libel most often; this is where the only wave of anti-Jewish violence took place (in 1900). However, antipathy towards Jews was also widespread in other regions of Lithuania. The geography of both blood libels and pogroms suggests that antipathy towards Jews was ingrained in Christian society across Lithuania.

The move from hatred to violence was greatly facilitated by the fact that Christian society regarded Jews as aliens standing on the lowest rung of the imagined ladder of ethnic hierarchy, belonging to a delinquent ethno-confessional group. Because Jews were the group most alien to any part of Lithuanian society (the gentry, peasantry, nationally-minded Lithuanians or Poles and so forth) and they could be identified easily and there was a strong belief in their communal solidarity, the whole Jewish community of a given location fell victim to violence, and not just allegedly delinquent individuals (as in the case of Lithuanian-Polish brawls over the language used in church).

Rumors and various texts that were created by Judeophobes were intended not only to mobilize mobs but also to terrorize Jews. Although rumors were often merciless where Jews were concerned (often there were death threats), pogroms in tsarist Lithuania did not turn into deadly ethnic riots. Thus the contents of a rumor should not always be regarded as a suitable predictor of the nature of threatened future violence. Some excesses arose spontaneously, while others were pre-planned; that is, there were individuals who, for personal reasons or because of their Antisemitism, wished to start a pogrom. However, no available data points to organized groups planning collective violence in Lithuania.

Usually wrath was directed against Jewish property and those Jews who dared to appear in public. In other words, the perpetrators sought to teach Jews a lesson and "show them their place." Certain pogroms (as in northern Lithuania in 1900) were done in part for amusement.

Organized self-defense (after 1903) or unorganized defense (in the early 1880s or at Dusetos in 1905) was one of the more common ways Jews combated pogroms. Organized self-defense during the 1905 Revolution sometimes halted incipient anti-Jewish violence, and often it served to scare off potential attackers. At the same time, it

was regarded as a provocation by Christians, especially conservative ones, not to mention the authorities, who considered it to exceed the boundaries of permissible self-defense. The authorities and Christian society took a particularly dark view of the use of firearms. In any case, Jewish self-defense was not a determining factor in halting pogroms in Lithuanian towns. Another, older method of protection was to appeal to the authorities to defend them against the threat of a pogrom. In order for these appeals to seem more plausible, they were sometimes accompanied by an argument that potential attackers were also Polish rebels against the tsar. Often Jews would try to appeal to authority figures within the Christian community, such as priests. There is practically no evidence of consistent attempts by Jewish political groups to combat anti-Jewish outbursts in Lithuania. The available information suggests that, despite the pragmatic Duma election pacts, Lithuanians as a national group did not interest Jews until the outbreak of World War I, and thus the content of Lithuanian publications received scant attention.

Analyzing the reasons for pogroms or the nature of collective violence, we inevitably touched upon the fact that anti-Jewish violence in Lithuania was less than in other parts of the Pale of Settlement. Social and economic modernization came late to Lithuania, and so Jews and Gentiles continued to live separately. There was less competition and less antipathy; there were no swiftly growing towns with new inhabitants. Another reason was the anti-tsarist nature of the Lithuanian national movement and the need to seek out allies in the struggle against Poles and Russians, which often led Lithuanians to regard Jews as allies. In turn, this reduced the scale of Antisemitism in Lithuanian nationalism.

Thus the shtetl-type pogroms that were infrequently encountered in nineteenth-century Lithuania were collective violence of a communal type, connected with a desire to punish a group perceived as delinquent and prevent it from further engaging in what Christians regarded as unsuitable activity and, in other words, "put the Jews in their place."



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*Ha-melitz* [Advocate], *Ha-karmel* [(Mount) Carmel], *Ha-tsfira* [Dawn],  
*Ha-zman* [Time]

## IN YIDDISH

*Di arbayter-shtime* [Worker's Voice], *Folkstsaytung* [People's Newspaper],  
*Der nayer veg* [The New Road]

## IN RUSSIAN

*Belaia Rus'*, *Birzhevye vedomosti*, *Budushchnost'*, *Evreiskii izbiratel'*, *Golos*,  
*Iuridicheskaiia gazeta*, *Khronika evreiskoi zhizni*, *Kievlianin*, *Kovenskii telegraf*,  
*Nedel'naia khronika Voskhoda*, *Novaia zaria*, *Novoe vremia*, *Novosti*, *Poslednie*



*izvestiia, Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik, Rassvet, Russkii evrei, S. Peterburgskie vedomosti, Severnaia Pchela, Severo-zapadnoe slovo, Severo-zapadni golos, Svet, Svobodnoe slovo, Vilenskii vestnik, Voskhod*

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