'Listen, the Jews are Ruling Us Now'
Antisemitism and National Conflict during the First Soviet Occupation of Lithuania, 1940–1941

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THE RED DELUGE: FIRST DAYS

ON 17 JUNE 1940 Ignas Šeinius, one of Lithuania's prominent writers and the Red Cross representative in Vilnius, returned to Kaunas. The trip proved difficult: 'As far as the eye can see . . . the dust rose like smoke from the road, choked with Bolsheviks and their vehicles. It was impossible to get around them, the dust infused with the unbearable smell of petrol and sweat.' A mounted Red Army officer, 'himself layered with dust, atop a dust-armoured horse', helped Šeinius's official Mercedes-Benz through the log jam—the only bright moment in the depressing montage of the invasion which he painted in his literary memoir *Red Deluge*.[1]

Unable to persuade his cabinet to authorize military resistance and determined not to preside over the country's surrender, President Antanas Smetona opted for exile. The leader of the nation left none too soon. The presidential motorcade set out for the German border on the afternoon of 15 June just as a Soviet aeroplane carrying the Kremlin's viceroy for Lithuania, Molotov's deputy Vladimir Dekanozov, touched down at Kaunas airport.[2] Augustinas Voldemaras, Smetona's long-time arch-rival, foolishly took the opportunity to return from exile in France only to be summarily arrested by the NKVD and sent to Russia.[3] The exile of inter-war Lithuania's two most prominent politicians, one voluntary, the other forced, signalled the political

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[1] I. Šeinius, *Raudonasis tvanas* (New York, 1953), 102–3.
[2] See the account by Marija Valušienė, Smetona's sister, written on 1 August 1940, as published in *Lietuvos aneksija: 1940 metų dokumentai*, ed. L. Gudaitis (Vilnius, 1990), 45–50.
[3] See A. Voldemaras, *Pastabos saulėlydžio valandą*, ed. G. Rudis (Vilnius, 1992).

and, in many cases, the physical extinction of the leadership which had guided the country for two decades. Whatever the rationale behind the decision not to resist the Soviet invaders, the submission to Moscow's ultimatum had onerous consequences. The inglorious demise of the First Republic (1918–40) did much to discredit the country's leadership and political culture which, despite its conservative authoritarianism, had provided a counterweight to extremism.

The newly formed People's Government, engineered by the Soviet Mission in Kaunas as a Trojan horse, was rudderless, befuddled by the events. Its masquerade as a democratic alternative was short-lived. The acting prime minister, the popular writer Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius, feared that the aggressive behaviour of the Soviets and their collaborators had begun to evoke an ugly response. On 27 June he protested to Nikolay Pozdnyakov, the chief of the Soviet mission in Kaunas, that the 'methods and tempo' of change were leading to social disorder and economic collapse. The writer resented his coerced role as 'an executor of the directives of the [Soviet] Mission', and warned that he could not be held responsible for the people's reaction to the country's Sovietization. Krėvė also complained that the legalization of the Communist Party was a dangerous political mistake, for 'it had aroused panic among a population which was perturbed by the behaviour of the Jews, who have disdain for Lithuanian statehood'.[4]

Well known for his leftist and pro-Soviet sympathies, Krėvė was no antisemite, but his perception of 'Jewish behaviour' was widely shared. There is little doubt that the images, and later the memories, of invasion contributed to the construction of ethnic archetypes which raised tensions between Lithuanians and the country's minorities, especially the Jews, which had, in any case, become more evident since the late 1930s.[5] While Šeinius watched the Red Army from the comfort of his car, the commander of the Lithuanian Sixth Infantry Regiment recorded his own memories, ironically entitled 'How They Showered Me with Flowers'. Colonel Jonas Andrašiūnas noted anxiously that 'hitherto unknown passions and attitudes suddenly appeared' in the town of Plungė on the day of the occupation. Informed that contingency plans to resist foreign invasion had been cancelled, he was ordered to meet up with and escort a unit of Soviet troops advancing into the town. After greeting the Soviet colonel, Andrašiūnas led the foreign force into town:

[My] car was in the lead followed by numerous Russian tanks. When we reached the outskirts of Plungė, I observed that quite a few people had gathered, mostly the town's Jews. Since I was first in line, they assumed that I was the commander of the Soviet tank force and showered

[4] Telephone report record [Telefonograma] no. 2, 27 June 1940, Makarov to USSR Commissariat of Foreign Affairs: Lietuvos ypatingasis archyvas, Vilnius (hereafter LYA), f. K-1, ap. 49, b. 828, fos. 45–6.

[5] Inter-war tensions are discussed in my 'The Historical Sources for Antisemitism in Lithuania and Jewish–Lithuanian Relations during the 1930s', in A. Nikžentaitis, S. Schreiner, and D. Staliūnas (eds.), *The Vanished World of Lithuanian Jews* (Amsterdam, 2004), 119–54. A more comprehensive account can be found in L. Truska and V. Vareikis, *Holokausto prielaidos: Antisemitizmas Lietuvoje XIX a. antroji pusė—1941 m. birželis* (Vilnius, 2004), 52–60.

flowers on both my car and the tanks behind me. The blossoms were fresh, the shouts and greetings in Russian. True, not everyone did this, but such exalted enthusiasm was shown especially by young Jewish boys and girls. I watched as the excited young Jews leaped into the Lithuanian gardens, grabbed up the flowers, and threw them onto my car and the Soviet tanks which crept along behind me.

A trifle? Perhaps, but the impression back then was horrendous, it burned in the mind. One part of Plungė's population exulted, the other wept. I saw a young Lithuanian farm girl sobbing as the Jews pulled up her flowers. It seemed as if two peoples had split up, separated, never to live in peace again. And these momentary images are so ingrained in my memory that I can still see them today.[6]

The historian Zenonas Ivinskis walked along the main thoroughfare in Kaunas as the tanks entered the city, noting that the street 'was full of people . . . especially Jews, crowded around the tanks and ingratiating themselves'. He noted that 'the scattered gaggles of Jewish boys and girls, no older than 15–18, who greeted every passing [Soviet] vehicle, made a very bad impression on me . . . But it was only the young Jews who were happy; the older Jews disapproved. They just looked on.' Leaving Kaunas a few days later, Ivinskis grew more depressed as he observed the 'seemingly endless columns of the Bolshevik army, surging into Lithuania on all roads'.[7]

Another native of Kaunas, the 15-year-old Valdas Adamkus, future president of Lithuania, recalled more than half a century later the stench of sweat that followed the marching Soviet soldiers. He found their reception odd, but this account by a Westernized head of state carefully avoided more precise identification of the welcomers:

I was even more surprised when small groups of people appeared carrying bouquets of flowers. I couldn't understand who they were, why they were rushing to hug these reeking soldiers of a foreign army. At the time I didn't quite understand the concept of 'occupation', but I grasped that Lithuania had suffered a great misfortune. I didn't condemn these people, but only wondered: they were nicely dressed, clearly Kaunas people, but for some reason they were handing flowers to the Russians.[8]

Jewish accounts reflect nearly identical images, albeit from a different perspective. Frieda Frome's childhood memories of Lithuania included the rosy conviction that under Smetona's regime 'Germans, Russians, Jews, and many others, in addition to the native Lithuanians, lived together in tolerance and peace'. As she remembers:

I was at home the afternoon of June 15, 1940, when I heard singing outside in the street . . . People were hurrying along the street, shouting, singing and clapping their hands. They were joined every few yards along their march by other excited men, women, and children. I rushed out of the house and into the street . . . 'Our liberators are coming,' they shouted

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[6] J. Andrašiūnas, 'Kaip mane apmėtė gėlėmis', *Akiračiai*, 1984, no. 10, pp. 13, 15.

[7] Zenonas Ivinskis's diary, entries for June 1940: LYA, f. 55, ap. 3377, b. 240. The reservation of the older generation of Jews is noted in Y. Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl* (New Haven, 2009), 38.

[8] V. Adamkus, *Likimo vardas — Lietuva: Apie laiką, įvykius, žmones* (Kaunas, 1997).

joyously. 'The Russians will make us free. Down with Smetona and the Fascists!' Looking in the direction they were headed, I saw great hordes of Russian soldiers in olive drab uniforms coming down from the hills.[9]

Harry Gordon records that the sudden appearance of tanks evoked fears of a German invasion, but as the red stars came into sight,

Our mood changed. Instead of panic we felt an unnatural joy. Everyone started hugging and kissing each other, family and neighbours, as if the Messiah had just arrived. Those who had been hiding ran out of their houses and began throwing bouquets of flowers at the approaching army. It took a week of marching day and night for the army to move through the town.[10]

Certainly, there were non-Jews among the flower-throwers, but they do not stand out in the diaries and memoirs. Bitter fault lines separate Lithuanian and Jewish wartime memories, but the contrasting reaction of the communities to the invasion does not seem to be one of them. Of course, hindsight can impose an arbitrary clarity on what, at the time, must have presented a kaleidoscope of images. Nevertheless, the selective initial impressions are revealing. Both Lithuanian and Jewish accounts evoke a crossing of the Rubicon. Even when the clichés of flower-throwing Jews who welcomed the Bolsheviks, or the flower-tossing Lithuanians who greeted the fascists a year later, are noted without rancour, they nonetheless reproduce archetypes which have survived to this day.

THE CONTEXT: SOVIET POWER AND ITS TROUBLES

Behind the noise of the tanks and crowds the social and political restructuring of the country proceeded apace. The confusing, often farcical, political machinations surrounding the invasion baffled even seasoned observers and politicians. Smetona had been right: at the very least, token armed resistance would have made it impossible to obscure the invasion as an act of aggression. In many quarters, the pent-up resentment of the Nationalists' monopoly of power meant that much of the well-orchestrated rejoicing at Smetona's downfall was shared by at least a part of the non-communist public. The promise of social reforms appealed to the economically marginal, while many Jews rejoiced at the prospect of 'equal treatment for all nationalities'. But the urban middle class and landed peasantry had little desire for revolution. During the first days of the occupation, the authorities reiterated solemn promises to safeguard private property. Only a minority expressed any desire to join the 'Soviet family of nations'.[11] The politics of Lithuania's Sovietization which led to the formal incorporation of the country into the Soviet Union in August 1940

[9] F. Frome, *Some Dare to Dream: Frieda Frome's Escape from Lithuania* (Ames, Iowa, 1988), 7, 10.

[10] H. Gordon, *The Shadow of Death: Holocaust in Lithuania* (Lexington, Ky., 1992), 11–12.

[11] See the revealing report of the commander of the Panevėžys District Security and Criminal Police, 27 June 1940, in *Lietuvos okupacija ir aneksija, 1939–1940: Dokumentų rinkinys*, ed. L. Breslavskienė et al. (Vilnius, 1993), 306–9.

have been well documented elsewhere.[12] It should not be surprising that the history of the summer of 1940 evoked inconsistent, even contradictory, interpretations, the least convincing of which is the standard Soviet portrayal of the occupation as a popular revolution, or the more recent Russian attempts to portray the annexation as consistent with international legal norms.[13]

There is little doubt as to who wielded real power once the Red Army had secured the country. At the apex was a working group of Soviet officials and operatives of the Lithuanian Communist Party (Lietuvos komunistų partija; LKP) who co-ordinated the activity of the People's Government through the Soviet mission in Kaunas, whose chief, the urbane Pozdnyakov, played the 'good cop' to Dekanozov, Beria's rude 'bad cop'. For its part, the Ministry of the Interior and State Security Department, which had been taken over by the communists within the first week and now operated under Soviet control, prepared to deal with the 'enemies of the people'. The security police carried out a wave of arrests: 504 prominent citizens had been detained by 17 July,[14] many of whom were deported to the Soviet Union, including Antanas Merkys and Juozas Urbšys, the last prime minister and foreign minister, respectively, of the independent state. The First Republic's body politic was effectively decapitated. Finally, the Soviet military conducted itself as a conquering force, frequently providing the direction and personnel to flesh out the fulsome demonstrations of gratitude to Stalin and the Soviet Union.

The vote for the so-called People's Diet (Liaudies Seimas) proved one of the most efficiently orchestrated electoral charades in history. The hitherto unknown Lithuanian Union of Labour (Lietuvos darbo liaudies sąjunga) appeared as if by magic on 6 July. The balloting then followed a week of 'campaigning'. The process was not without its bizarre aspects and even some (in hindsight) comic relief.[15] On

[12] See the latest English-language survey, A. E. Senn, *Lithuania 1940: Revolution from Above* (Amsterdam, 2007), 119 ff.

[13] Since the late 1990s the Russian refusal to acknowledge as an occupation the sudden influx of more than half a million Soviet troops into the Baltic countries under conditions of an ultimatum has achieved official approbation. By contrast, while the Czech president Emil Hácha formally agreed to Hitler's 'protection' in March 1939, few Germans would argue that the Nazi seizure of the Czech lands under threat of force was anything other than aggression against an independent state. See, on Soviet preparations in the event of a 'Finnish variant' of resistance, Nina Lebedeva's introduction in *SSSR i Litva v gody Vtoroi mirovoi voiny*, i: *SSSR i Litovskaya Respublika (mart 1939–avgust 1940 gg.)*, ed. A. Kasparavičius, Č. Laurinavičius, and N. Lebedeva (Vilnius, 2006), 51–3.

[14] Beria's report to Stalin and Molotov, undated: LYA, f. K-1, ap. 49, b. 828, fo. 85.

[15] At least two candidates claimed to have discovered that they had been nominated when they read the daily newspaper in Kaunas. The electoral slate also included a phantom candidate: Jonas Abakonis apparently found a place on the ballot at the suggestion of a comrade who vaguely remembered this peasant as a stolid underground party member years before. No one apparently bothered to check whether this stalwart was actually living and available. When the duly elected Abakonis failed to turn up at the first session of the People's Diet, his place was taken by 'president' Justas Paleckis. See L. Dovydėnas, *Mes valdysim pasaulį: Atsiminimai* (Woodhaven, NY, 1970), 193–4; A. Garmus, 'Lietuvos įjungimas į SSSR-Maskvos diktatas', in J. Balčiūnas (ed.), *Lietuvių archyvas: Bolševizmo metai*, 4 vols. (Kaunas, 1942–3), iii. 36–7; J. Bulavas, 'Žaidimas seimu', *Vilniaus balsas*, 2/3 (Oct. 1989).

16 July the electoral commission announced that 1,386,569 voters, or 95.5 per cent of the total, had cast 99.2 per cent of their votes for the only permitted list: the seventy-nine Labour candidates. Contemporary police reports, party records, and other sources provide enough evidence for the coercive and farcical nature of the election.[16] On 21–23 July the Diet, in a circus atmosphere of organized enthusiasm, met in Kaunas to declare Soviet power and choose a delegation to request admission into the Soviet Union, to 'bring Stalin's sun' to Lithuania. On 3 August 1941 the USSR Supreme Soviet accepted Lithuania into the Soviet Union.[17]

The political machinations had proceeded smoothly and pro-Stalin demonstrations produced impressive street theatre, but the invasion, occupation, and Sovietization of Lithuania delivered severe shocks to society. Lithuania's inter-war history and geopolitical realities promised a difficult transition. Most of the younger generation, especially those who had benefited from the first modern polity dominated by ethnic Lithuanians, had come to accept independence and majority rule as the sole legitimate form of governance. The landed farmers were especially concerned to retain title to their holdings, an attitude evident from the very first days of the occupation.[18] Lithuania's strong identification with the Catholic Church ensured that attacks on religion would rouse opposition.

Many urbanites were unimpressed with the ragged appearance of the Soviet soldiers, and some of the invaders became the objects of gleeful snickering, fuelled by stories of officers' wives appearing on the streets in nightgowns mistakenly acquired as fine evening wear. Most of the popular tales of simple Russian soldiers confused by indoor plumbing and entranced by consumer goods were probably apocryphal, but at least some were based on observed behaviour. The image of scraggly Soviet infantry, coloured by stereotypes of 'Mongol-like' soldiers, had reinforced the perception that Sovietization would drive down living standards.[19] On 25 June the security police reported that rumours of annexation 'truly frighten many people, who say that they fear destitution, which can result from the loss of Lithuania's independence'.[20]

[16] *Lietuvos Liaudies Seimas: Stenogramos ir medžiaga*, ed. K. Surblys (Vilnius, 1985), 31. See Marijampolė District Security and Criminal Police Report, 16 July 1940, and Panevėžys District Security and Criminal Police Report, 18 July 1940, in *Lietuvos okupacija ir aneksija*, ed. Breslavskienė et al., 366, 375–7; also LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 110, fos. 2–5; LKP Central Committee Directive, 14 July 1940: LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 108 (text in Russian). Cf. the reports by the head of the American mission in Kaunas, Owen Norem: Norem to State, 15 July 1940: National Archives, College Park, Maryland (hereafter NA), M1178, roll 19, 860M.00/450; Norem to State, 19 July 1940, NA, M1178, roll 19, 860M.00/452.   [17] Senn, *Lithuania 1940*, 238–41.

[18] Šiauliai District Security and Criminal Police Bulletin, 24 June 1940: Lietuvos centrinis valstybės archyvas, Vilnius (hereafter LCVA), f. 378, ap. 12, b. 296, fo. 5.

[19] See the racial musings in Šeinius, *Raudonasis tvanas*, 104–8. Cf. Jewish memoirs, for example Gordon, *Shadow of Death*, 12–15. The nightgown episode is repeated by both Gordon, ibid. 14, and Frome, *Some Dare to Dream*, 13. There is also the 'alienating impression' of the 'Mongolian' Soviet soldiers as 'Huns storming Europe', whose singing sounded like the 'howling of wolves', as recalled by B. Press, *The Murder of the Jews in Latvia, 1941–1945*, trans. L. Mazzarins (Evanston, Ill., 2000), 32.

[20] Vilnius District Security Police Bulletin no. 127, 25 June 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 699, fo. 584.

Whatever the reality, the perception of Soviet power as representative of primitive 'Asiatic' values aroused contempt among those already predisposed to reject communism.

Aside from other psychological factors, a significant destabilizing circumstance was the growing conviction that the Soviet regime was transitory. One popular belief prevalent in the summer of 1940, frequently reported by the authorities, was the imminence of a Russo-German war. This perception was so widespread that in late June a hoarding spree emptied the shops.[21] Unsurprisingly, as anti-Soviet attitudes deepened, the Germans, as one police report intimated, increasingly came to be seen as liberators, especially among 'the wealthy bourgeois'.[22] But this canard about the bourgeois was Marxist wishful thinking: it was not only the well-to-do who came to see their salvation in the West.

An interesting paradox of the Lithuanian SSR during 1940–1 was the incongruity between the Soviet regime's institutional power and its political weakness. The Soviets failed to achieve any substantial acceptance of what most Lithuanians quite logically perceived as a foreign imposition. The widely anticipated German invasion (and, later, during 1945–50 the hope of a Western intervention) mitigated a spirit of resignation in the face of overwhelming force.

CONFLICTS OF THE BRAVE NEW WORLD: SOCIETY, IDEOLOGY, POLITICS, AND RACE

The social and political dislocation which accompanied Sovietization inevitably produced ethnic and social fissures far more dangerous than any disenchantment with the flower-throwers. Aside from the communists and fellow travellers who welcomed the new order on ideological grounds, much of Lithuania's Jewish community had good reasons to see at least some aspects of Soviet rule as beneficial. Soviet power provided obvious protection from Nazi Germany. Even anti-communist Jews could argue that 'under Germany we were doomed, under Russia we were free'.[23] It was also obvious that many Jews, who understandably preferred Stalin to Hitler, did not share the depth of the Lithuanians' grief and shame at the loss of independence. In addition, for a considerable part of the Jewish population, especially its youth, the new regime promised career opportunities, particularly within the bureaucracy and economy, which had been limited during the period of nationalist rule.

Numerous sources reflect the hubris of the young. The Šiauliai police reported on 24 June 1940 that 'the irresponsible Jewish element, especially youths, walks in

[21] Šiauliai District Security and Criminal Police Bulletin, 24 June 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 12, b. 296, fo. 4. Cf. Vilnius District Security Police Bulletin no. 127, 25 June 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 699, fo. 582.

[22] Vilnius District Security Police Bulletin no. 144, 17 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 699, fo. 640; cf. Vilnius District Security Police Bulletin, no. 209, 20 July 1940: LCVA, f. R-754, ap. 3, b. 311.

[23] See W. W. Mishell, *Kaddish for Kovno: Life and Death in a Lithuanian Ghetto, 1941–1945* (Chicago, 1988), 8–9.

the streets of the towns and does not even allow Lithuanians to pass by on the pavement . . . Lithuanians complain that the Jews are bragging: "We are now the masters"'.[24] Harry Gordon remembers something similar:

During this time the young communists, some of them Jewish, had quite a celebration. They insulted the Lithuanian police, laughed about the president, Antanas Smetona, who had run to Germany, and told exaggerated stories about the Lithuanian police beating up Jews. This antagonized the whole Lithuanian population . . . At this time, they began hiring Jews at the NKVD, the Russian FBI, and many Jews became food distributors to the Russian army.[25]

William Mishell recalls that 'as citizens with equal rights' his brother-in-law, sister, and father all found employment in the new order. At his own job in Kaunas, he wrote, 'I progressed very nicely and my prospects for the future were extremely bright.' But he also lamented: 'With their economic base totally destroyed, the Jews reached out to whatever was offered to them.' Noting that this 'contributed to the strained relations between the two nations', Mishell remarked that 'Although there were relatively few Jews who got these new jobs, to the Lithuanians it looked like an invasion.'[26] A number of Jews found their niche in highly visible economic positions as the pace of nationalization accelerated. Lithuanian officials sometimes served as figureheads, while more experienced Jewish assistants actually administered the nationalized companies.[27] One such newly minted Lithuanian factory chief's child-like scribbles can be found on his delegate form for the Fifth Congress of the LKP. Silvestras Runča listed himself as a 'self-educated' former worker of the Neris factory. He misspelled the name of the enterprise, his own title of 'director', and the word 'factory'.[28]

Some of the conflicts seem to reflect a continuation of the rivalry within the economy and professions characteristic of the inter-war period.[29] The medical services can serve as an example. In his memoir of the occupation, Krėvė claimed that the minister of health, Moisiejus Leonas Koganas, had, within days of his appointment, purged ethnic Lithuanian doctors, characterizing them as 'reactionaries and pillars of the old Smetona regime'. When Krėvė protested to Paleckis and threatened to resign, most of the fired Lithuanians were reinstated.[30] In March 1941 one M. Vasiljevas complained to the Kaunas municipal personnel office that Jews in the city's hospitals were working in a 'chauvinistic' spirit. Dr Mozė Bermanas, a Koganas appointee, was accused of Zionist leanings. As the former personal physician to Smetona's household, he had once been awarded the prestigious Order of

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[24] Šiauliai District Security and Criminal Police Bulletin, 24 June 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 12, b. 296, fo. 5.

[25] Gordon, *Shadow of Death*, 11–12.   [26] Mishell, *Kaddish for Kovno*, 8.

[27] D. Levin, 'The Jews and the Socio-Economic Sovietization of Lithuania, 1940–1941 (Part I)', *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, 17/2 (1987), 27.

[28] List of Delegates to the Fifth Congress of the LKP(b), Feb. 1941: LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 19, fo. 344.

[29] See Sužiedėlis, 'Historical Sources for Antisemitism', 125–31.

[30] V. Krėvė, *Bolševikų invazija ir liaudies vyriausybė*, ed. A. Zalatorius (Vilnius, 1992), 29–30.

Gediminas. Vasiljevas alleged that Jewish doctors hired only other Jews, assigning the 'dirty work' to other nationalities, and refusing to admit non-Jewish patients. In this scenario, the Jews were portrayed as reactionaries who 'accuse others of anti-semitism and reaction, but then, hiding behind the veil of communism, carry out national chauvinistic and reactionary work'. Vasiljevas wrote how 'society is observing everything and asks how long this can go on', warning that 'if the Health Department does not solve this problem in due course, the working class itself will have to settle the issue. After all, working people would occasionally like to see a non-Jewish doctor in the clinics.'[31]

A more dangerous trope was the perception of Jews as traitors, 'stabbing in the back' the state and nation whose land they had enjoyed as guests—or in antisemitic parlance 'exploiters'—for centuries. The long-held perception of the inextricable link between Jews and Bolshevism was reinforced. Colonel Kazys Škirpa, Lithuania's envoy to Germany, penned his impressions on returning to Berlin after a brief visit to Kaunas in late June 1940:

The only ones who still feel good [in the current situation] are the Jews. It goes without saying that, just as there were communists among them before, very many new ones have now appeared. Also, fearing the Reich, many Jews who basically do not hold communist convictions are more inclined to think that it is better to align with Soviet Russia and submit to communism. For this reason, in the various street demonstrations it is the Jews who above all express sympathy for Soviet Russia, completely forgetting that only yesterday they were licking the Lithuanians' soles, expressing loyalty to Lithuania for its liberalism towards the Jews. Lithuanian society, of course, is indignant at this Jewish fawning over the Russians and is thus each day more and more infected with antisemitism, especially since the Jews, in emphasizing their loyalty to the Soviets, often publicly insult Lithuanians, particularly former government officials . . . The Russian language, as in tsarist times, has once again become for the Jews an expression of Russian patriotism.

Škirpa reported a fist fight between a Lithuanian soldier and a Jewish worker which grew into a window-smashing pogrom in the town of Marijampolė.[32] Škirpa's role as the leading advocate of a pro-German Lithuanian orientation might make his observations suspect if it were not for the fact that other sources, including numerous police and party documents in the archives, paint a picture of intense ethnic rivalry and conflict within every sphere of Lithuania's Sovietized reality of 1940–1, tensions played out in a broad spectrum, from the intellectual elite to the 'toiling masses'.[33]

The perception of 'Jewish power' motivated many protesters at the grass-roots level. A group of villagers from Taurai sent a delegation to their district chief to

[31] LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 341, fos. 153–5.
[32] Škirpa to Šaulys, Balutis, and Klimas, 1 July 1940: Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, California, Edvardas Turauskas papers, CSUZ 75015-A, box 3, fo. 10. The Marijampolė riot appears in a number of police reports.
[33] A useful brief overview is given in Senn, *Lithuania 1940*, 195 ff.

request a permit for an 'anti-Jewish rally' which would protest against the 'Jews intruding into all government agencies'.[34] The same resentment was reported in Šakiai, where 'many farmers and Lithuanians' were angered at the inclusion of 'citizens of Jewish nationality' in the militia.[35] In early July the security police in Vilnius noted the widespread resentment against Jews, 'who have become very insolent and dare to brag that they are now in power; consequently, there is talk among Lithuanians and Poles that, if the Germans were to come, the Jews would suffer greatly'.[36] Antisemitic feelings united the most unlikely allies: 'Recently there has emerged a peculiar co-operation of Lithuanian and Polish nationalists' against the Jews, noted a police report in late July 1940.[37] Such a bond would have been unimaginable under the Smetona regime and certainly was not the 'fraternal unity of nations' envisioned in contemporary communist propaganda.

For many Lithuanian workers and peasants national prejudice trumped class solidarity. One government report concluded that the perception of Jewish domination was 'the most important reason for the unpopularity of the Communist Party'.[38] The mutual antagonism of various national groups, especially Jews and non-Jews, was one of the most widely reported phenomena of the wrenching social and political transformations of the first weeks and months of Soviet rule.[39] The plethora of demonstrations and rallies, with radical speeches inciting crowds, was conducive to a tense atmosphere. Prejudicial stereotypes and passions, old and new, rubbed emotions raw. Offended soldiers complained about the overwhelming presence of the red flags and they grumbled at the conspicuous lack of the national tricolour, which reflected the collapse, in their words, of 'a general national and civic consciousness'. One lieutenant carped that 'now there is no place for chauvinism, but the Jews demonstratively degrade Lithuanians, their language and songs', reporting that when his regiment appeared in a demonstration and broke into song, 'Jews who had gathered on the pavements began to jeer'.[40] Assaults on the Church and the army, the two institutions held in high esteem by most Lithuanians, were especially resented.

The first month of the fierce and hurried push for Sovietization, which began in early July and culminated with the campaign for the People's Diet, produced numerous reports of a sharpening social divide. On 11 July an election rally attracted a predominantly Polish crowd in Trakai. As a Jewish agitator began to speak, 'the

[34] State Security Department Bulletin no. 92, 3 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 12, b. 296, fo. 27.

[35] State Security Department Bulletin no. 207, 16 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 225, fo. 756.

[36] Vilnius District Security Police Bulletin no. 138, 9 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 699, fo. 619.

[37] State Security Department Bulletin no. 210, 23 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 225, fo. 767.

[38] Ministry of the Interior Information Bulletin no. 13, 7 Aug. 1940: LCVA, f. R-754, ap. 3, b. 314, fo. 77.

[39] Vilnius District Security Police Bulletins nos. 138 and 139, 9 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 699, fo. 619.

[40] Report of the Army Staff's Second Section, 16 July 1940, in *Lietuvos okupacija ir aneksija*, ed. Breslavskienė et al., 368.

crowd began to ridicule him . . . from all sides it was proclaimed that the Jews promise the people all kinds of wonderful things' only for the purpose of gaining power. 'Otherwise', the report noted laconically, 'the rally went off without incident.'[41] On the same day another campaign event took place in nearby Lentvaris:

A bus arrived . . . from Vilnius bedecked with election campaign placards in Yiddish. Only Jews singing Russian songs were riding on the bus. When the bus stopped near the railway station and the newcomers began speaking in Yiddish and Russian, the Poles and Lithuanians who had gathered to listen to the speeches immediately dispersed, expressing their dissatisfaction with the Jews. Only about eighty local Jews, of whom the majority were underage youths, listened to the speeches. The Lithuanians and Poles were determined to beat up these Jews, but the police official, who arrived just in time, did not allow disorder.[42]

On the eve of the balloting, the NKVD's resident in Kaunas reported to Moscow that leaflets had appeared in Alytus district urging a boycott of Jewish businesses and a 'quiet struggle' against the Jews, railing against the establishment of a 'second Palestine' in Lithuania.[43] Even the poorer Lithuanians and Poles, while approving of the new, ostensibly more socially equitable, political system, expressed resentment towards the Jews' alleged 'leading role in political and social life'. Conflicts of the kind described above became commonplace. 'Finally', the authorities reported, 'in recent days in Vilnius there have been incidents of fisticuffs in the streets, Poles and Lithuanians against the Jews.'[44]

The Šiauliai police reported in typical bureaucratese: 'It is characteristic that in the various election district precincts, the rejected ballot slips were mainly of candidate no. 5, Naochas Mackevičius. The majority of people of Jewish nationality placed only ballot no. 5 into the envelopes, while the villagers and other voters of non-Jewish nationality would tear it out.' The same phenomenon was noted elsewhere.[45] Officers observing the electoral behaviour of the Fifth Infantry Regiment recounted: 'A considerable number of soldiers, without being subject to outside influence, tore out the ballot coupon of the only candidate of Jewish nationality, putting it in their pocket or just throwing it on the floor. Most of the ballots scattered on the floor belonged to the Jewish candidate.'[46]

Many voters deposited, in place of the ballots, various texts and diatribes against

[41] Vilnius District Security Police Bulletin no. 140, 11 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 699.

[42] Vilnius District Security Police Bulletin no. 141, 12 July 1940: ibid.

[43] Makarov report, 10 July 1940: LYA, f. K–1, ap. 49, b. 828, fo. 72.

[44] See Vilnius District Security Police Bulletin no. 141, 12 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 699. For an overall account of Jewish participation in the July 1940 elections based on Yiddish sources, see D. Levin, 'The Jews and the Election Campaigns in Lithuania, 1940–1941', *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, 10/1 (1980), 39–45.

[45] Šiauliai District Security and Criminal Police Bulletin no. 98, 18 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 12, b. 296, fo. 13. Cf. State Security Department Bulletin no. 209, 20 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 225; and Vildžiūnas report, in *Lietuvos okupacija ir aneksija*, ed. Breslavskienė et al., 375.

[46] Report of the Army Staff's Second Section, 16 July 1940, in *Lietuvos okupacija ir aneksija*, ed. Breslavskienė et al., 367.

the new regime. The archival collection of former People's Government president Paleckis contains a representative sample of thirty such 'protest enclosures' left at voting precincts in Kaunas on 14–15 July. Fourteen of the messages are antisemitic; some are ungrammatical and misspelled, indicating lower-class origin. A few proclaim dire threats and bloody vengeance against 'Jews and degenerate communists'. Even some protesters of a leftist orientation showed impatience, demanding a 'true Lithuanian socialism' free of Jews. 'Adolf Hitler, the liberator from the Jews' was one of the impromptu votes. Another scrap dropped in the ballot box read: 'The entire battalion for Adolf Hitler. Signed: A soldier.' There were other anti-Bolshevik candidates: Smetona, former army commander General Stasys Raštikis, the Finnish hero Marshal Mannerheim, Mussolini, Voldemaras, and Mickey Mouse.[47] These were likely the first write-in candidates in Lithuanian history. Rumours that pro-communist voters would be 'dealt with when the Germans come' reflected the sense of impermanence surrounding the new regime, especially in the villages. Some voters 'forgot' to bring their passports to the precincts, thus avoiding the incriminating stamp signifying that they had cast their ballots for the People's Diet.[48]

Lithuania became the first (and only) predominantly Catholic republic of the Soviet Union. The secularizing policies of the People's Government, such as the introduction of civil registry, welcomed by some as a long overdue modernization, were, however, soon supplanted by a more forceful attack on the Church. As early as 27 and 28 June, leaflets appeared in Šiauliai city directed against communists and Jews, proclaiming 'Long live Catholic Lithuania!'[49] The prominence of several Jews in the party's propaganda and media apparatus, which was in the forefront of the regime's anti-religious campaigns, fuelled the notion that they were a danger to the faith. In August 1940 health minister Koganas reportedly informed the mayor of Kaunas, Antanas Garmus, of plans to seize the city's Theological Seminary, the republic's last remaining Catholic institution of higher education, to expand the city's Jewish hospital. Several sources claim that even leading Lithuanian communists were aghast at such an inane provocation in a predominantly Catholic country. By the end of the year, the seminary buildings had instead been transferred to the Red Army.[50] Also in August the security police reported that a Jewish official named Kleinas had been appointed as liquidator of the bookshop of the St Casimir Society in Kaunas. Since the society had assisted poorly educated villagers, maidservants,

[47] Ballots of citizens with anti-Soviet attitudes cast in Kaunas during the People's Diet elections, 14–15 July 1940: LYA, f. 3377, ap. 58, b. 593, fos. 6–83.

[48] Report of Tauragė District Chief Baldušis, 21 July 1940, in *Lietuvos okupacija ir aneksija*, ed. Breslavskienė et al., 385.

[49] Šiauliai District Security and Criminal Police Bulletin no. 69, June 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 12, b. 296, fo. 35.

[50] Two versions of the incident agree on the basics: K. Jūra, *Monsinjoras* (Brooklyn, NY, 1979), 65–6; and the more detailed account in V. Brizgys, *Katalikų Bažnyčia Lietuvoje: Pirmoje rusų okupacijoje 1940–1941 m., vokiečių okupacijoje 1941–1944 m.* (Chicago, 1977), 25–6, and his 'Kunigų seminarija Kaune bolševizmo metais', in Balčiūnas (ed.), *Lietuvių archyvas*, i. 56–8.

and devout older women (Lith. *davatkos*), its demise caused 'widespread disgruntled talk among the people about the fact that the society has been seized by the Jews'.[51]

On 10 July Kaunas workers arrived in Trakai in a truck adorned with portraits of Soviet leaders to conduct an election rally attended by hundreds of locals, mostly Poles and Lithuanians. As one speaker shouted 'down with the priests, down with the Church', the crowd countered with, 'give us bread and work, but don't touch the priests!' In the end, the campaign lorry barely made its escape; otherwise, as the police noted, the agitators 'would have come to harm from the enraged crowd'. The local communists were unhappy with such heavy-handed agitation by outsiders, which only made their work more difficult by inciting people in Catholic villages.[52]

The examples of anti-Christian incidents involving Jews and other supporters of the new regime, some real, others apocryphal, many doubtless embellished, res-onated among a Catholic population already suffused with antisemitic sentiment.[53] The impression that Jews sought to destroy Christianity was, of course, based on the behaviour of a relatively small number of party members and supporters, but the distorted logic, however faulty, proved inexorable. On 19 August 1940 Jonas Malašauskas, a bookbinder, appealed to the LKP Central Committee to open all businesses on Saturdays. He reported the following conversation among 'a group of pious old women and a neighbour's son':

Listen, the Jews are ruling us now. Just take a look: they seized the salaries of our priests, drove them out of the schools, and now they want to discontinue [religious] services over the radio. But they don't do anything to the Jews: *just as they celebrated their sabbath before, so they do it now, just as they closed their stores, so they have the* shabas *now*. And you can see that nearly all government employees are Jews. So isn't it obvious that we are ruled by the Jews?[54]

Shared socialist values did little to bridge the animosities among the lower ranks of comrades and fellow travellers. Owen Norem, the head of the American mission in Kaunas, wrote to the State Department that 'there seems to be a great deal of fric-tion between the Gentile and the Jew even when both seek to embrace the Red

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[51] State Security Department Bulletin no. 217, 5 Aug. 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 225, fo. 788. Cf. the account in M. Vaitkus, *Atsiminimai*, viii: *Milžinų rungtynėse, 1940–1944* (London, 1972), 46–7.

[52] Vilnius District Security Police Bulletin no. 140, 11 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 699, fo. 621.

[53] The following embellished second-hand memoir is reminiscent of the desecration stories which circulated during the Spanish Civil War: 'The worker from Vilkija, Petrauskas, told me that the former notary public, the young Jewish communist Dov. Tam., who had become a famous communist official, on one Sunday invited all officials and other people into the Riflemen's Union hall. He placed a small cross on a table and ordered everyone to make a disrespectful gesture in poking at the Christ-figure in order to show their loyalty to the Communist Party. Then the worker Čiapas shouted: "Jew! It's not your business to handle the priests, it's better that you deal with your rabbis! And if there's nothing here, then what's this business with poking?" The others were also appalled, but remained silent out of fear.' From the account by Bruno Ignatavičius, written down in Ottawa, 22 Aug. 1974, and provided to the author by Klemensas Jūra.

[54] LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 280, fos. 153–4 (emphasis original).

tenets'.[55] Ethnic tensions were particularly intense within the Komsomol, where Jewish influence was historically strong. Young Jews were occasionally criticized in the Yiddish press for their 'chauvinism'. A communist official in Panevėžys observed a local Komsomol meeting:

Sitting by a table in the Komsomol club is a Jewish committee member and round him are Jewish comrades speaking Yiddish loudly, while on the other side of the club sits a Lithuanian committee member and round him are Lithuanian members speaking Lithuanian. The Jewish Komsomol members explained the phenomenon by saying that it is impossible to become friends with them [the Lithuanians] there.[56]

Leftist sympathies provided no immunity against antisemitic fantasies. A flyer left at a police precinct by the self-described Lithuanian Anti-Jewish Committee on 8 July 1940 hailed the achievement of 'freedom and equality', which was endangered by 'a new exploiter climbing onto the slow Lithuanian's neck—the Jew'. The same Jews who once shouted 'Long live Antanas Smetona!' and who had 'purchased a plantation in Palestine for their friend Smetona' now supported the new regime. The leaflet explained:

We do not say that we must beat the Jews, for the Jews never beat us either. We will declare a quiet war against them. We will not buy their goods, but, most important, we will not allow them into our organization. We will create our own communism . . . the Jews—let them build their own if they wish. We want to see those really rich Jews next to us doing manual labour, which they have avoided and feared all their lives. We want them to get only that which they conscientiously earn.[57]

The threat posed by the prevailing anti-Soviet mood was aptly demonstrated by a thorough NKVD secret report on the political atmosphere within the Lithuanian 29th Territorial Riflemen's Corps, the Red Army formation which had incorporated most of the Lithuanian military. One Lithuanian soldier consoled himself with the hope that 'we'll survive somehow—soon the Germans will come and we'll get back what's ours and be free'. A junior officer opined: 'Hitler has proposed to clean out the Baltics, the Soviet Army will be gone and our Lithuania will be free.' One lieutenant thought that 'Germany is much more cultured than the USSR, and Lithuanians are more cultured than Russians. If Germany seizes Lithuania, we will save culture.' The NKVD acknowledged the growing ideological radicalization as a reaction to foreign occupation: 'If formerly the Nazi territorial-racial theory did not attract [the men], now very often there is talk among the officers that only German culture can save Lithuania.' The contempt for the new order was palpable: 'barely literate Asians [*aziyaty*] have come here and have destroyed our national culture. Only Hitler can save us.' As an alternative, the men pointed to Slovakia, where 'life is splendid'.

[55] Norem to State, 17 July 1940: NA, M1178, roll 19, 860M.00/464.
[56] As quoted in D. Levin, 'The Jews in the Soviet Lithuanian Establishment, 1940–1941', *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, 10/2 (1980), 33.
[57] State Security Bulletin no. 202: LCVA, f. R-754, ap. 3, b. 311, fos. 38–40.

Attempts to change the restive mood among the soldiers were counterproductive: 'The replacement of the Lithuanian political officers by Russians and other nationalities has tremendously worsened the national problem in the units of the Territorial [Corps].' As an example, the NKVD noted that in the 26th Cavalry Regiment of the Corps 'there is a Jewish political officer [*politruk*] who, because of his ignorance of the Lithuanian language, is openly ridiculed by the officers in front of the Red Army men'. The Soviet secret police noted that the majority of the 29th Corps were 'completely unreliable' and predicted with considerable prescience, and with a curious reference to Russia's Civil War, that 'given the opportunity, the officers would go across to the Germans by the hundreds, just as, in their time, tsarist officers crossed the Don to the Cossacks'.[58]

Contrary to impressions prevalent among Lithuanians, Jewish society was hardly a monolith in its attitude to the new regime. The flowery welcome given the Soviet troops in Kaunas did not reflect the attitude of the older and more conservative elements in the community. Days before the invasion, the rabbis of the Vilnius region had gathered to pray 'that the Soviets not take over Lithuania'.[59] Once in power, Antanas Sniečkus, the head of Lithuania's communist party, reported that 'two opinions are noticeable among Jewish society'. The wealthier Jews opposed annexation by the Soviet Union and 'preferred the current government since it guarantees democracy and private property, but the Jewish poor hold the opposite view',[60] the latter supporting the 'complete absorption of Lithuania by Russia'.[61] The Jews of Eišiškės were disturbed that 'in Vilnius many rich Jews have been arrested who have nothing to do with politics'.[62] Frieda Frome, who, in her words, had initially succumbed to the 'Russian way of thinking', became increasingly disenchanted: Juozas, a 'very ignorant' Lithuanian commissar, was put in charge 'over Daddy in the store', and her family began to bear the brunt of the regime's anti-bourgeois policies.[63] At the end of July an army report noted that 'it is interesting that dissatisfaction with the present order has been observed among soldiers of Jewish nationality. Previously there were never such cases.'[64]

Thousands of manufacturing and commercial enterprises were nationalized during the first year, the majority Jewish-owned, and middlemen were eliminated

[58] The quotations in this and the preceding paragraph are from 'Dokladnaya zapiska o politiko-moral'nom sostoyanii 29-go territorial'nogo korpusa', Jan. 1941: LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 531.

[59] State Security Department Bulletin no. 188, 12 June 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 225, fo. 695.

[60] State Security Department Bulletin no. 193, 27 June 1940: ibid. 712.

[61] Šiauliai District Security and Criminal Police Bulletin no. 90, 1 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 12, b. 296, fo. 33.

[62] Vilnius District Security Police Bulletin no. 147, 20 July 1940: LCVA, f. 378, ap. 10, b. 699, fo. 650.

[63] See Frome, *Some Dare to Dream*, 11–18. For a useful overview, see Levin, 'The Jews and the Socio-Economic Sovietization of Lithuania, 1940–1941 (Part I)', 18–30, also his 'The Jews and the Socio-Economic Sovietization of Lithuania, 1940–1941 (Part II)', *Soviet Jewish Affairs*, 17/3 (1987), 26–38.

[64] Army Staff Second Section Bulletin, 29 July 1940, in *Lietuvos okupacija ir aneksija*, ed. Breslavskienė et al., 392.

as 'the great exploiters of the working class'.[65] On the other hand, a number of previous owners reinvented themselves as socialist directors of the very same, and now state-owned, enterprises. To antisemitic minds this reaffirmed the conviction that Jews were behind the big money in any social system, encouraging the simplistic axiom that Jews, more favourably inclined towards Soviet rule, suffered less than Lithuanians. Even in less prejudiced heads, perceived Jewish gains in the nationalized enterprises and within the Soviet administration, real but limited in scope, obscured the suppression of independent Jewish religious and cultural life.

Hebrew-language schools in the republic were closed after the Soviet invasion, although a smaller number of Yiddish institutions were allowed to operate. Only twelve of the twenty-three Jewish secondary schools which had functioned under Smetona in the spring of 1940 were still open a year later. The diverse and colourful Jewish political, social, and cultural life of the inter-war period was severely curtailed. Seventy-nine of the 217 banned public organizations were Jewish. Most Yiddish and Hebrew periodicals ceased publication: most Jews were left with the communist *Emes* ('Truth'). Lithuania's world-famous yeshivas were closed and Jewish religious holidays, which had official status under the bourgeois regime, were declared regular work days.[66] On 1 October 1940 a gathering of 'Jewish workers and white-collar employees' demanded that Jews work during religious holidays; otherwise, since numerous enterprises contained a majority of Jewish workers, offices and factories would close. In view of the 'imperialist war' and the grave economic situation, declared these selfless Soviet patriots, 'we have no right to aggravate our economic situation and harm the cause of our nation and country'.[67] It is difficult to imagine such anti-Jewish cultural policies and enforced self-flagellation under the inter-war right-wing regime.

The Soviet authorities knew better than to assume unqualified Jewish support for a communist future. On 29 March 1941 Major Petr Gladkov, the People's Commissar of State Security of the Lithuanian SSR, delivered his report 'On the Counter-Revolutionary Activity of Jewish Nationalist Organizations'. The Soviet police were concerned about the numerous 'Zionist, bourgeois, revisionist, Betarist, and other formations' which had flooded the republic, particularly the Vilnius area, following the destruction of Poland. The American Joint Committee was allegedly a major force behind anti-Soviet activity. Even worse, Soviet security observed that 'at the present time Jewish counter-revolutionary elements have begun to ally themselves with other anti-Soviet elements regardless of nationality'. The major purpose of the Jewish organizations, according to Gladkov, was to facilitate emigration to America and Palestine, and they were not above co-operating with the Polish nationalists in forging travel documents. The heart of the 'Jewish nationalist counter-revolutionary element' consisted of the remaining synagogues and rabbinical schools.

[65] Reports in *Tarybų Lietuva*, 1 and 4 Oct. 1940.

[66] S. Atamukas, *Lietuvos žydų kelias: Nuo XIV a. iki XXI a. pradžios*, 3rd, rev., edn. (Vilnius, 2007), 221–3.   [67] *Tarybų Lietuva*, 2 Oct. 1940.

Gladkov singled out one Rabbi Zhukovich, who utilized religious services to 'educate the Jewish people in a spirit of hatred of communism'. The determination of religious Jews to resist the godless state, and the contacts that Jewish political and religious organizations maintained with the 'imperialist powers', that is, Britain and the United States, were a danger to the Soviet state. According to Gladkov, in response to the increase in Jewish counter-revolutionary activities, the security police arrested eighty-nine Jewish counter-revolutionaries at the end of 1940. In the spring of 1941, Soviet security uncovered dozens of Bundist, Betarist, and Zionist circles in Kaunas, Vilnius, Ukmergė, Kėdainiai, and other Lithuanian towns with large Jewish communities.[68]

REALITIES OF POWER: THE CHANGING FACE OF LITHUANIAN COMMUNISM

To what extent did the conflicting perceptions and stereotypes which swirled around the politics of the first year of the Soviet occupation correspond to the realities of power? The imposition of the Stalinist system depended on forging the LKP into a dependable instrument of Moscow's rule. For the first time since the revolution, the Kremlin faced the task of integrating 'foreign' members of the Comintern into the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (Vsesoyuznaya Kommunisticheskaya partiya (bol'shevikov); VKP(b)). The history of the country's Sovietization became the subject of considerable obfuscation at the hands of Marxist historians who understood that the legitimizing rationale for the very existence of the Lithuanian SSR depended on the evasion of any genuine investigation into the events of 1940. As long as access to the party's records was strictly controlled, the assaults on Marxist mythology could be dismissed as anecdotal evidence or deceptions manufactured by émigré and other anti-communist circles. Whatever their other faults, the hardliners proved to be prescient censors: their fears that serious scrutiny of the revolutionary narrative would be politically catastrophic were amply vindicated by the events of the late 1980s.

Since the pernicious charge that 'Jews and Bolsheviks are one and the same' constituted the most successful Nazi propaganda theme during the German occupation, there is clearly some sense in examining the actual distribution of what can loosely be termed 'ethnic power'. Needless to say, the subject is laden with potentially ugly connotations. One can reject outright the accusation that 'most NKVD torturers were Jews' and similar canards in the antisemitic arsenal. Nevertheless, some cautions are in order. The archival evidence is easily manipulated and can produce contradictory images. The social and ethnic face of Lithuanian communism throughout the entire Stalinist period represented a shifting mosaic, so that selective statistical

[68] The relevant quotations and information are found in Gladkov's report 'O kontrrevolyutsionnoi deyatel'nosti evreiskikh natsionalisticheskikh organizatsii', 29 Mar. 1941: LYA, f. K-1, ap. 10, b. 4, fos. 179–98. My thanks to Dr Solomonas Atamukas for providing me with a copy of the document.

'snapshots' can easily mislead. The membership rolls of the LKP as of 1 January 1941 reveal a majority of ethnic Lithuanians among the republic's communists, some two-thirds of the 2,486 party members and candidates. These oft-cited figures supposedly demonstrate the predominance of native cadres,[69] but although the overall membership numbers are sometimes instructive, they are of little use in understanding who ran the country.

On the eve of the Soviet invasion the LKP had approximately 1,600 members, the majority in the underground. Native-born Jews and Russians constituted nearly half of the membership. Following the occupation, as the prisons disgorged hundreds of gaunt leftists, the party also took in a flood of new recruits. By October the percentage of Lithuania's communists who had been comrades for at least one year had plummeted from 82 per cent to 19 per cent. Not surprisingly, many who joined turned out to be opportunists of questionable 'ideological maturity'. During the first weeks, the largest contingent of newcomers consisted of Jewish merchants, tradesmen, office employees, and proletarians; by mid-July, Jews, albeit briefly, made up 76 per cent of communists registered in Kaunas city. An estimated 40–50 per cent of new candidates in the small towns were also Jews. On the other hand, a significant number of ethnic Lithuanians signed up, including former Riflemen's Union members and active nationalists. By the end of the summer, ethnic Lithuanians made up four-fifths of the 826 members of the republic's city, district, and rural party committees. But again, while these numbers reveal something about political dynamics and party demography, they tell us little about who held the most influence.

By early October Lithuania's communist membership had tripled to more than 5,000. The situation could not last. On 8 October 1940 Lithuania's communists were formally made a constituent member of the VKP(b), but Moscow had come to regard the newly baptized, but ideologically polluted, LKP(b) with undisguised horror.[70] A Central Committee review completed on 1 December 1940 concluded that of 5,388 communists registered by the regional party committees during the peak period in early autumn, only 1,507 had a record of 'underground service' (Rus. *stazh*).[71] In the autumn of 1940 the party began the massive expulsion of ideologically and socially questionable recent new members, a house-cleaning accompanied by an influx of Soviet communists, primarily Russophone 'experienced cadres'. Russian became the language of the LKP(b) Central Committee and the most important government ministries. By the end of the year about half of Lithuania's communists had been drummed out of the party.[72]

Official orthodoxy mandated the LKP(b) to work in a spirit of 'internationalism', that is, ethnic solidarity, but the volatile party politics of Soviet Lithuania were rife

[69] See e.g. K. Surblys (ed.), *Lietuvos Komunistų partija skaičiais, 1918–1975* (Vilnius, 1976), 45 ff.

[70] See N. Maslauskienė, 'Lietuvos komunistų tautinė ir socialinė sudėtis 1939 m. pabaigoje—1940 m. rugsėjo mėn.', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, 5 (1999), 95–9. The party's title was now Lietuvos komunistų partija (bolševikai), LKP(b).   [71] LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 139, fos. 2–4.

[72] N. Maslauskienė, 'Lietuvos komunistų sudėtis 1940 spalio—1941 birželio mėn.', *Genocidas ir rezistencija*, 6 (1999), 28–9.

with national tensions which heightened as the purges progressed in the autumn of 1940. Native Jewish and Lithuanian communists, whatever their differences, both resented the tutelage of the Russophone arrivals who understood their new positions in the Baltic as launching pads for career advancement and were quick to realize that charges of Zionism and/or Lithuanian nationalism provided ammunition against local rivals. Russian overseers, following Soviet practice since the later 1930s, made special efforts to reduce the number of Jews within the LKP(b). In Kaunas, two Russophone comrades, Shupikov and Parashchenka, launched a hunt for Jewish Zionists and Mensheviks, but their campaign was often successfully resisted by the majority Jews on the city's party committee, supported in turn by Jewish members of the Central Committee.[73]

By early October ethnic Lithuanians had temporarily achieved a majority in the Kaunas party organization, making up 60 per cent of the communists in the city, mainly owing to the arrival of replacements for 'bourgeois' government officials.[74] But nothing illustrates better the transitory nature of party statistics during this period than the fact that this supposed Lithuanian dominance lasted but a few weeks, after which Russians more or less owned the Kaunas organization until the early 1950s. According to party records, by the end of January 1941 the Russian percentage had nearly doubled (25 per cent of party members), the proportion of Lithuanians had declined from two-thirds to 53 per cent, while the Jewish ratio remained little changed at 15 per cent.[75]

An important instrument of foreign power was the system of control by which Russophone second secretaries were appointed to supervise the work of native first secretaries. Lithuanians constituted 77 per cent of first secretaries, while Russians and Belarusians made up 84 per cent of their supposed deputies. Contrary to the principles of management and suggestive of the real role of the second secretaries, 72 per cent of the 'assistants' held more than three years of 'experience as cadres', compared with only 42 per cent of the first secretaries. By December 1940 there was not a single case where both the first and second secretaries of any city or district party committee were of the same nationality.[76] As the party explained: 'The better-trained and selected communists . . . assigned by the Central Committee of the VKP(b) to work in the Lithuanian SSR have been sent to the secretaries and district party committees.'[77] On another front, Lithuanians continued to lose ground among the regional party committee members, where they had once predominated: in January 1941, exclusive of the first and second secretaries, they made up but 55 per cent of the members, with Jews (22 per cent) and Russians (21 per cent) providing most of the remainder.[78]

[73] Ibid. 28–36.   [74] Maslauskienė, 'Lietuvos komunistų tautinė ir socialinė sudėtis', 99.

[75] LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 170, fos. 27–9.

[76] LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 282, fo. 174, also fos. 7–11, 53, 75, 124; cf. the list of first and second secretaries of the Lithuanian SSR's city and district party committees in December 1940: LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 283; also the documents in LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 281, fos. 7–8, 27.

[77] LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 457, fo. 10.

[78] The data are based on LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 457, fos. 10–13.

The important Fifth Congress of the LKP(b), which took place in Kaunas on 5–
9 February 1941, accelerated the republic's Sovietization. The opening speeches
included the requisite expansive militant incantations about exporting revolution.[79]
The effusive gratitude to Stalin and the Red Army played to a receptive audience.
Ninety-three of the 277 voting delegates to the congress were listed as 'workers of
the Red Army and NKVD', mostly Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians.[80] Of the
342 delegates in attendance (sixty-five were non-voting participants) only seventy-
nine were veterans of Lithuania's pre-war underground Communist Party who had
'suffered repression during bourgeois times'. The proceedings were held in Russian.

Table 1 Delegates to the Fifth Congress of the LKP(b), by nationality

National group	Voting delegates		Non-voting delegates	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Lithuanians	107	(38.6)	30	(46.2)
Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians	128	(46.2)	24	(36.9)
Jews	33	(11.9)	9	(13.8)
Other	9	(3.2)	2	(3.1)
Total	**277**	**(100)**	**65**	**(100)**

Note: The numbers of delegates to the congress reflected in the party records show slight variations,
but since they amount to less than 1% in either direction, the inconsistencies are not statistically
significant. Cf. Surblys (ed.), *Lietuvos Komunistų partija skaičiais*, 61, and R. Šarmaitis, 'LKP(b)
Penktasis suvažiavimas', in id. (ed.), *Revoliucinis judėjimas Lietuvoje* (Vilnius, 1957), 576.

Sources: LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 12, fo. 1; LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 4, fo. 200.

After the opening ceremonial triumphalism, the congress confronted directly the
obstacles to Lithuania's Sovietization. A major concern was the countryside's hos-
tility to Soviet power and the anti-communism of the Catholic population.[81]

   The discussions concerning cadre policy also exposed the social and national ten-
sions which had characterized the Soviet occupation from the very beginning. There
were persistent complaints that ethnic Lithuanians favoured 'their own' in staffing
administrative and economic institutions; reactionary Lithuanian nationalism was
thus identified as a chief obstacle to Sovietization.[82] But ethnic Lithuanian chau-
vinism was not the only concern. The Vilnius party boss Baltrushka reported that
among 180 recent applications for membership within his party section, 157 were

[79] LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 4, fo. 139. The delegate Shuvalov declared that the war ignited by the cap-
italist powers would inevitably involve the world proletariat; thus, the communist cause required not
peace, but the conclusion of a 'just war, *a war for socialism, for the liberation of other nations from the bour-
geoisie*' (emphasis original).   [80] LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 4, fos. 197–8.
[81] Speeches of Damulevich and Alekna: LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 4, fos. 248, 322.
[82] According to the veteran communist Bronius Pušinis, the Commissariat of Agriculture was a
bastion of anti-Soviet Lithuanian nationalism. Delegate Lukoševočius complained of Lithuanian chau-
vinism against Jews and Poles in the Lietūkis and Maistas companies. LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 4, fos. 31,
124.

non-Lithuanians, primarily Jews, Russians, and Belarusians.[83] At the same time, Feliksas Bieliauskas, the head of the republic's Komsomol, who had replaced a Jewish chief, complained that only 57 per cent of the party's youth wing consisted of ethnic Lithuanians, which, he complained, was clearly insufficient, considering that Lithuanians constituted 80 per cent of the republic's population.[84]

Perhaps the sharpest dispute at the congress was provoked by Soviet Lithuania's nominal head of state, Justas Paleckis. He criticized overly enthusiastic ideologues who saw it as 'their chief duty to hang a sword of Damocles over every office employee . . . because of some lapse in his résumé, regardless of the quality of the work'. Paleckis also appealed for a more balanced approach to the problem of nationalism in economic and social life, claiming, albeit in typically obsequious fashion, that it was not only the Lithuanians who were at fault:

> On the national question, it must be said we do not yet have that healthy, authentic internationalism which has already developed in the other [Soviet] republics. We must take this fact into account. We often observe the phenomenon of people usually supporting 'their own'. And so a Lithuanian will above all support a Lithuanian, a Jew will trust only another Jew, a Pole will promote a Pole, a Russian will try to attract more Russians.[85]

The former left-wing journalist had unwittingly disturbed a hornets' nest. The muted appeal for competence in the workplace, and his reminder that Lithuanians were not the only practitioners of national exclusion, provoked sharp rebukes from hardliners and members of the 'fraternal parties'.[86] Like the proverbial schoolboy, Lithuania's head of state was quickly taken behind the shed. As he had done in the summer of 1940, Pozdnyakov, the Kremlin's de facto viceroy, played the role of peacemaker, acknowledging that Paleckis's critics were doctrinally correct, but tactfully refusing to take sides on the volatile issue of Polish—Lithuanian relations in Vilnius, reminding the congress that from 'our point of view nationality has only secondary importance'.[87] Whatever the rhetoric, the actual redistribution of power was formalized when the congress approved the party's leading organs on 9 February. The new Central Committee of the LKP(b) contained forty-eight full members, of whom scarcely half were ethnic Lithuanians; of sixteen candidate members only three can clearly be identified as Lithuanians, who also constituted less than half of the important Control Commission attached to the Central Committee.[88] The policy of promoting 'native cadres' thus took a back seat to the realities of governing an occupied and restive land.

Lithuania's communists, nearly half of whom had joined in 1940, desperately needed fraternal guidance. The listing of the republic's communists of 1 January 1941 indicated that only twenty-nine comrades (1.2 per cent) had completed an institution of higher education and only seventy-eight (3.1 per cent) could boast secondary

[83] Ibid. 211.   [84] Ibid. 223–8.   [85] Ibid. 242–3.

[86] Ibid. 251–2, 282; 293–4; 312. Delegate Abramov's response: an 'evil jest' and a 'strange theory'.

[87] Ibid. 335–50.   [88] Ibid. 361, 390–1, 408, 412–45.

school certificates. Scarcely a tenth of the members and candidates had ever attended secondary school. The majority (1,296, or 52 per cent) had completed a primary education, which in Lithuania consisted of the first four grades. More than a third (36 per cent) of party members and candidates were described as 'literate but without primary schooling'.[89] The educational profile of this most ignorant political body in the history of Lithuania is revealing. The majority of the party consisted of minimally educated comrades who were in no position to debate, let alone decide, anything. The image of uncomprehending faces, hands raised, and 'voting', captures the reality.

The Russification of Soviet Lithuania's power structure accelerated swiftly during the early months of 1941. On the eve of the Nazi invasion, Russophone party members, the majority of them recent arrivals, had come to exercise disproportionate power in the party.

Table 2 The ethnic composition of the LKP(b), 1940–1941 (%)

Nationality	1 Oct. 1940 (N = 5,365)	1 Jan. 1941 (N = 2,486)	22 June 1941 (N = 4,703)
Lithuanians	68.5	67.0	46.4
Jews	16.2	16.6	12.6
Russians and others[a]	12.0	15.6	41.0

[a] The category of 'Russians and others' includes other Russophones, mainly Ukrainians and Belarusians. Non-Slavonic 'others' are statistically insignificant.

Note: The figures for membership on 1 Jan. 1941 differ slightly from those presented here if one includes data from the Švenčioniai district incorporated into the Lithuanian SSR but formerly within the jurisdiction of the Belarusian Communist Party. I have excluded these figures, which hardly affect the overall statistics, because they were not included in the LKP(b)'s own reports of 1 Jan. 1941 and there is some doubt about the extent to which the party members of this region were integrated into the political life of the Lithuanian party.

Sources: Based on LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 162, fo. 4; LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 170, fos. 27–9; Maslauskienė, 'Lietuvos komunistų tautinė ir socialinė sudėtis', 99, and ead., 'Lietuvos komunistų sudėtis', 38; Truska, 'Lietuvos valdžios įstaigų rusifikavimas', 16.

And yet the overall picture shown in Table 2 still understates the grip on power exercised by the Russophone cohort. A more enlightening indication of relative influence is the situation in the country's two most important cities. In Vilnius the city committee of the LKP(b) listed on 1 January 1941 included a majority of Russians (45 per cent) and Jews (26 per cent). Meanwhile, the ethnic Poles, a majority in Lithuania's historic capital, produced not a single communist there. In December 1940 an ethnic Lithuanian from Russia, the first secretary Pavel Baltrushka, presided over a Vilnius city party committee consisting of four Jews and four Russians. The Vilnius district committee employed only two Lithuanians out of thirteen members; the majority were Russian and Ukrainian immigrants.[90] The

[89] LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 250, fo. 21.   [90] LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 283.

Table 3 The ethnic composition of the Kaunas city LKP(b), 1940–1941 (%)

Nationality	1 Oct. 1940 (N = 911)	1 Jan. 1941 (N = 376)	22 June 1941 (N = 900)
Lithuanians	60.4	42.0	21.7
Jews	31.6	47.9	25.8
Russians	7.4	8.8	52.4

Sources: Based on party lists as found in LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 165; LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 170, fo. 20; Maslauskienė, 'Lietuvos komunistų tautinė ir socialinė sudėtis', 99, and ead., 'Lietuvos komunistų sudėtis', 27; Truska, 'Lietuvos valdžios įstaigų rusifikavimas', 16.

Russian assumption of control in Kaunas city, where Lithuanians made up three-quarters of the population and which was the republic's de facto administrative capital during 1940–1, is shown in Table 3.

]Even more indicative than the statistics on the rank and file is the fact that among the sixty-seven Kaunas city delegates to the Fifth Congress of the LKP(b) in early 1941, only seventeen were Lithuanians (25 per cent); twenty were Jews (30 per cent), while the largest number (thirty, or 45 per cent) were Russians and other eastern Slavs, the majority of them incomers from the Soviet Union.[91] Among all communists of the Kaunas district at the same period, Russophones (42 per cent) outnumbered both Lithuanians (41 per cent) and Jews (14 per cent). Aside from the large urban party organizations, the influx of Russians was particularly noticeable in the bureaucracy of the LKP Central Committee, in the mid-level administrative posts, and, particularly, in the upper echelons of the security services.[92] The pattern of Russification, to a greater or lesser extent, was evident throughout the republic.[93] Such was the reality behind the images of 'Jewish power'.

Unfortunately, perceptions rather than realities of party politics stoked the fires heating the cauldron of national mistrust and hatred. Matters grew worse as the year of Soviet rule neared its end. Jews themselves, of course, were acutely aware of their vulnerability in the increasingly hostile atmosphere. 'This is not the time of the Smetona government: we are now living as if on a volcano', a member of the Betar central committee named Khrust confided to a police informer.[94] The Soviet deportations of 14–17 June 1941 pushed an already anxious Lithuanian society over the edge. Almost 20,000 men, women, and children, including several thousand Jews,

[91] The registration forms of the delegates to the Fifth Congress are in LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 19.

[92] The Russification of the entire system, especially the security police, is well documented in the works of Truska and Maslauskienė. Further examples in the archives: LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 170, fo. 6; LYA, f. 1771, ap. 2, b. 457, fo. 10.

[93] LYA, f. 1771, ap. 1, b. 170, fos. 20 ff.; also Maslauskienė, 'Lietuvos komunistų sudėtis', 37. Cf. L. Truska, 'Lietuvos valdžios įstaigų rusifikavimas 1940–1941 m.', *Lietuvos gyventojų genocido ir rezistencijos tyrimo institutas: Darbai*, 1 (1996), 16–17.

[94] Gladkov, 'O kontrrevolyutsionnoi deyatel'nosti', 193.

were rounded up and loaded onto cattle wagons, most bound for Siberia and the Soviet far north.[95] 'The mood in the country was as before an explosion', remarked the Holocaust survivor William Mishell.[96]

DEADLY PERCEPTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

In 1918–20 thousands of Lithuanians, Jews, and other minorities had fought together to restore an independent state even as they entertained conflicting visions of the new polity. But the deteriorating international situation of the 1930s and the realities of the Soviet occupation profoundly affected communal attitudes. The republic's national communities turned inward as their geopolitical orientations became ever more incompatible. Examples of Lithuanian and Jewish responses have been outlined above. For their part, most of the Germans simply repatriated to the Reich during the spring of 1941. The Polish population was in an impossible situa- tion: most detested Soviet rule, but they also viewed Lithuanians as the 'occupiers' of Vilnius, while the Nazis hardly figured as potential liberators.

Geopolitical realities contributed to the radicalization of society as well as the Lithuanian anti-Soviet resistance. While never a monolith, the Front of Lithuanian Activists (Lietuvių aktyvistų frontas; LAF), established on 17 November 1940 in Berlin by a group of émigrés and led by Škirpa, gravitated to the militant nationalist political spectrum. The LAF's pro-German stance did not go unchallenged, espe- cially by Lithuanian diplomats still accredited in Western capitals and older leaders who, like Smetona, were hostile to Nazi ideology and doubted Germany's success against an eventual Anglo–American alliance, but those who favoured a German ori- entation held the upper hand. Some were impressed by the raw power of National Socialism, especially in the face of strategic realities: with Britain seemingly on the verge of defeat, Germany appeared as the only force capable of expelling Lithuania's tormentors. The most extreme were a small group of Voldemaras supporters, especially military officers, who adopted a thoroughly Nazified world view, pro- claiming themselves 'a young Lithuanian generation . . . which has come to honour the new racial ideals of fascism and national socialism'. Their brief ideological outline listed a number of principles for Lithuania's domestic politics, of which the second stated: 'Jews are stricken from life.'[97] A number of these self-styled crypto-

[95] Unfortunately, the old figures of 35,000 victims and more, including as many as 7,000 Jews, are still being regurgitated by Western writers unaware of the latest findings. The figures for the deportees do not include the mostly Lithuanian political prisoners evacuated at the outbreak of the war. There is a solid statistical analysis of the June 1941 deportations in E. Grunskis, *Lietuvos gyventojų trėmimai 1940–1941, 1945–1953 metais* (Vilnius, 1996), 38–53. See the dissenting analysis of Atamukas, *Lietuvos žydų kelias*, 230–1.

[96] Mishell, *Kaddish for Kovno*, 9. Cf. the observation by G. Šuras, *Užrašai: Vilniaus geto kronika, 1941–1944*, trans. N. Kvaraciejūtė and A. Antanavičius (Vilnius, 1997), 23.

[97] The programme is cited in the diary of Z. Blynas, *Karo metų dienoraštis 1941–1944 m.*, ed. G. Rudis (Vilnius, 2007), 123–4. A short overview of the ideological spectrum of the LAF is given in Sužiedėlis, 'Foreign Saviors, Native Disciples', 333–41; cf. Truska and Vareikis, *Holokausto prielaidos*, 86–94.

Nazis had a limited political impact, but they were to play their part as foot soldiers of the Holocaust. It is difficult to establish the political and ideological interaction between the émigrés and the resisters in Lithuania. It is likely that LAF-Berlin's increasingly strident antisemitism was partly a reaction to the mood back home, which was a distorted response to a real tragedy and needed little prodding from 'foreign influences'.

Speaking more broadly, one should also not underestimate the extent to which life itself served as the midwife of radicalism. The older generation's relatively moderate political discourse appeared hopelessly outmoded if not embarrassingly irrelevant. It was obvious that the only avenue of liberation, unless one were incurably naive, lay in a violent breakdown of the partnership established in August 1939 between the Soviet conquerors and the Nazis. The predicament of ethnic communities caught in diametrically opposite and illusory (though, from their point of view, logical) geopolitical solutions to their distress is not altogether unique to Lithuania, or the other territories annexed by the Soviet Union in 1939–41.[98] The Soviet occupation worsened matters by intensifying the already inflamed ethnic passions, while destroying and discrediting both the political regime and the social stratum which, as in the 1930s, acted as the only force with the prestige and authority to restrain antisemitic excess. The other nationalities had reason to chafe at Soviet rule, but none saw their situation in quite the same way as the Lithuanians. Overall, anti-Soviet activity was a complex and contradictory mosaic of attitudes and movements, which actually included both Jews and Lithuanians.[99]

The thoroughly mined recent archival evidence[100] discredits some politicized stereotypes, some of which are embedded in memoirs and other anecdotal accounts: for example, that the Jews were not a significant player in Lithuania's Sovietization process (they were); or that the majority of secret police interrogators were Jews (they were not); or that Soviet rule was really 'Jewish power' in disguise (it was not). The real power in Lithuania lay with the handful of doctrinaire Stalinists of the Sniečkus type and the rapidly growing army of predominantly Russophone military, security, and other cadres offering 'fraternal assistance'.

The virulent atmosphere of 1940–1, including the rise of antisemitism, contributed greatly to the anti-Jewish violence which accompanied the outbreak of the Nazi–Soviet war. As one Jewish historian concluded sharply, 'The special ferocity which the population demonstrated toward Lithuanian Jews during the Holocaust was undoubtedly the outcome of the very complex political situation created by the

[98] See Bauer, *Death of the Shtetl*, 32 ff.

[99] The various Lithuanian groups are discussed in V. Brandišauskas, *Siekiai atkurti Lietuvos valstybingumą (1940 06–1941 09)* (Vilnius, 1996). Cf. Gladkov, 'O kontrrevolyutsionnoi deyatel′nosti'.

[100] See Truska, 'Lietuvos valdžios įstaigų rusifikavimas'; cf. Maslauskienė, 'Lietuvos komunistų tautinė ir socialinė sudėtis', as well as her sequel, 'Lietuvos komunistų sudėtis'. The data published there confirm what I found in my own search of the same archives in 1992.

Soviet occupation in 1940 and 1941.'[101] Such categorical assertions have a basis in the history of the period, but they also ignore, as contributing factors, both the increasingly evident antisemitism of the 1930s and the role played by the Nazi invaders in the summer of 1941. Excessive emphasis on the Soviet occupation as a causal factor has led unscrupulous authors to embrace the 'theory of two genocides' according to which Lithuanian collaboration in the Holocaust was but revenge for the atrocities committed by Jewish supporters of the Soviets.[102] However, the recent scholarly interest in the issue of 'Jews and Others' in the Soviet-occupied territories, the first venue of the genocide, should allow us to understand better the dynamics of communal conflict in a depoliticized setting.[103]

Antisemitism as an ideological construct is founded on religious and/or racial mythologies, but it would be an oversimplification of the history of the first Soviet occupation to characterize Lithuanian hostility to the Jews as simply the result of a 'fantasy', unconnected to the actual situation as it evolved in 1940–1 or ungrounded in the realities of a wrenching political and social transformation. One should resist the temptation to interpret the first year of the Soviet occupation from a post-Holocaust perspective and read the history backwards. Lithuania's Jews of the period were not a hapless body buffeted by a storm of racial hatred as during the Nazi occupation. Antisemitism gained new strength, embedded as it was within a conglomerate of old aversions, traditional stereotypes, and distorted perceptions of the Other's behaviour, and was further intensified by the clash of competing collective interests and geopolitical orientations.

[101] A. Shochat, 'Jews, Lithuanians and Russians, 1939–1941', in B. Vago and G. L. Mosse (eds.), *Jews and Non-Jews in Eastern Europe, 1918–1945* (Toronto and Jerusalem, 1974), 310.

[102] Versions of the 'revenge' theory in the popular and pseudo-academic press are too numerous to mention here. One of the more egregious examples is by the renowned writer J. Mikelinskas, 'Teisė likti nesuprastam, arba Mes ir jie, jie ir mes (Pamąstymas ne tiek įkyrėjusia, kiek amžina tema)', *Metai*, 8–9 (1996), 126–63.

[103] See especially E. Barkan, E. A. Cole, and K. Struve (eds.), *Shared History—Divided Memory: Jews and Others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939–1941* (Leipzig, 2007).