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# Who Voted Communist? Reconsidering the Social Bases of Radicalism in Interwar Poland

Jeffrey S. Kopstein and Jason Wittenberg

The recent controversy over Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors* is a reminder that there remains little consensus on the role played by national minorities in interwar Polish politics.<sup>1</sup> As Poles seek to understand the Nazi and subsequent Soviet occupations, grave doubts remain about the loyalty of ethnic Belarusians, Germans, Jews, and Ukrainians to the interwar Polish state, and suspicion persists regarding minority complicity in facilitating the Soviet takeover. These doubts and suspicions have manifested themselves in assignments of collective guilt for the crimes of communism, poisoning Poles' relationships with other nationalities, in particular the Jews. One important component of this controversy is the question of who supported the communists during the interwar period. At the popular level, the widely held belief that most of Poland's Jews, whether for internationalist or particularist reasons, were ready to betray the interwar republic through support for the Communist Party helped define twentieth-century Polish anti-Semitism. Scholars have made much of the role of nonethnic Poles, especially Jews, in the leadership of the Communist Party, but an equally important question is who supported the party at the mass level. To what degree did Poland's national minorities vote for the communists?

Answering this question is tricky. Since no surveys were conducted during this period, it is necessary to rely upon indirect estimation using census and electoral data. These indirect methods pose at least two sorts of problems. The first is statistical. We are interested in estimating the *unobserved* proportion of a minority group voting for a particular party while we *observe* only the aggregate geographic distribution of minorities and votes. We will need a method for estimating the unobserved quantity of interest using the observed electoral and census data. The second problem concerns the quality of the data for interwar Poland. The meaningfulness of statistical estimates clearly rests on the degree to which the data being analyzed accurately mirror the underlying reality on the ground. If the census numbers do not reflect the actual number and location of na-

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1. Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton, 2001). See, for example, the various contributions to the symposium on *Neighbors* in *Slavic Review* 61, no. 3 (Fall 2002).

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tional minorities, and if the reported electoral results reflect the desires of the government rather than the vox populi, then there is little point in generating statistical estimates.

In this paper we unite the rich research on interwar Poland with recently developed techniques of ecological regression to produce systematic, reliable estimates of minority electoral preferences. We do not address the question of the ethnic composition of party leaders but restrict ourselves to an assessment of mass voting behavior. We hope, however, that these estimates will contribute to the broader discussion of interwar Poland by providing a fundamental baseline against which both scholars and nonscholars can sensibly evaluate and discuss contentious historical and political issues. In what follows we survey the broader theoretical debates and empirical findings regarding minority support for communist parties in interwar east central Europe. Next, we outline the political context of the 1922 and 1928 Polish national parliamentary elections as well as the 1921 and 1931 censuses. Despite certain inaccuracies in the census and electoral data, these data can, with appropriate care, provide a valid picture of minority partisan preferences. Finally, we lay out our estimates of how the minorities voted, using an original database that spans 268 out of 272 districts (*powiaty*) in interwar Poland. We find the minority vote to be highly variegated, both over time and across different groups. This is particularly true of support for communist parties. We conclude the paper with a discussion of the broader implications of our findings.

### Who Would Vote Communist?

Electoral support for communist parties and their front organizations was always modest in interwar east central Europe. At their most popular, communist organizations never managed to garner more than 20.3 percent of the vote in Bulgaria, 2 percent in Hungary, 10 percent in Poland, 13.2 percent in Czechoslovakia, and 12.4 percent in Yugoslavia.<sup>2</sup> The apogee of support came before the onset of collectivization at the end of the 1920s and the era of high Stalinism in the 1930s in the Soviet Union. Thereafter the appeal of communism waned throughout the region, although the absence of free and fair elections in almost all of the countries during the 1930s makes any comprehensive evaluation all but impossible.

The best analysis of the sources of communist electoral support during this period in east central Europe remains Richard Burks's *The Dynamics of Communism in Eastern Europe*.<sup>3</sup> In an era when data processing was very expensive and time consuming, Burks created a dataset of regional electoral and census data for several countries in east central Europe and used correlation and multiple regression to pinpoint the sources of communist strength. At the cross-national level Burks noted a connection between the level of support for communists and the image of Russia in the popular mind. Slavic countries historically friendly toward Russia such as Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia had more popular communist

2. See Joseph Rothschild, *East Central Europe between the Two World Wars* (Seattle, 1974).

3. Richard Burks, *The Dynamics of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Princeton, 1961).

parties than Hungary, Poland, or Romania, where Russia was seen as opposing national aspirations.

Burks's most interesting finding was that within countries, the vote for the communists correlates not with class position (workers preferred, he maintains, the social democratic parties) but with ethnic marginality. In Poland, for example, areas containing a disproportionate number of Jews, Belarusians, and Ukrainians gave disproportionate support to communists, as did the heavily Hungarian districts in the Slovak half of Czechoslovakia. For Burks national minorities voted communist because communist internationalist ideology appealed to the losers of ethnic politics. Communism in the 1920s promised a world in which political solidarities would no longer be based on ethnicity and was thus bound to appeal to ethnically marginal groups. In his most convincing evidence, Burks shows that even though the communists could gain almost no support in Hungary itself, the Communist Party performed surprisingly well among the Hungarians in the Slovak portion of Czechoslovakia because of its support for cultural and political autonomy during the 1920s.<sup>4</sup>

Although Burks's work remains the most comprehensive and systematic treatment of the subject, it is not alone in drawing the connection between ethnic minorities and support for the communists. Robert Györi Szabó notes how in post-World War I Hungary, after the short-lived communist "Councils Republic," in which Jewish communists played a prominent role, Jews in general became identified in the public mind with communism.<sup>5</sup> In the case of Poland, the Jewish role has been noted at the level of both party leadership and mass support, although both remain a matter of some dispute.<sup>6</sup> M. Dziewanowski notes that "the fact that the CPP was the focal point of dissatisfied national minorities, largely contributed to the growth of xenophobia and anti-Semitism."<sup>7</sup> More colorfully, in his memoir of interwar Poland Czesław Miłosz writes, "In our city, people called May 1<sup>st</sup> the 'Jewish Holiday.'<sup>8</sup> The belief, nourished by the Catholic Church, that even if most Jews were not communists, most communists were probably Jews, was broadly held and deeply felt among Poles.<sup>9</sup> At its most extreme, this relationship took on quasi-mythical proportions in

4. The Communist Party was outlawed in Hungary throughout much of the interwar era, so we do not really know how popular the party would have been had it been permitted to run. But given its pro-Soviet orientation it is unlikely that it would have garnered very much support in a fair election.

5. Róbert Györi Szabó, *A Kommunista Párt és a Zsidóság* (Budapest, 1997), 34.

6. Jan de Weydenthal asserts that "Jewish Communists assumed a pivotal position in the leadership of the KPRP and the KPP, occupying most of the seats in their Central Committees." de Weydenthal, *The Communists of Poland: An Historical Outline* (Stanford, 1978), 26. Other scholars, using lists of members' last names, dispute this. See Franciszka Swietlikowa, "Centralne instancje partyjne KPP w latach 1918–1938," *Z Pola Walki* 12, no. 4 (1969): 139–45. See also, Moshe Mishkinsky, "The Communist Party of Poland and the Jews," in Yisrael Gutman, Ezra Mendelsohn, Jehuda Reinharz, and Chone Shmeruk, eds., *The Jews of Poland between the Two World Wars* (Hanover, 1989), 56–74.

7. M. K. Dziewanowski, *The Communist Party of Poland: An Outline of History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), 332.

8. Czesław Miłosz, *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition* (Garden City, N.Y., 1968), 95.

9. Jacek Majchrowski, "Some Observations on the Situation of the Jewish Minority in Poland during the Years 1918–1939," *Polin: A Journal of Jewish-Polish Studies* 3 (1988): 306.

the nationalist discourse of interwar Poland and can be conveniently summed up in the word *Żydokomuna* (Judeo-communism)—the idea that Jews above all other minorities were (and are) the main supporters of communism at the mass level and that communism was primarily a vehicle of a broader Jewish conspiracy to seize power.<sup>10</sup> While acknowledging the appeal of the Communist Party to Jews, other scholars have maintained that the communists in Poland picked up support among other minority groups, especially the Belarusians and to a lesser extent the Ukrainians, throughout the 1920s.<sup>11</sup> Burks himself notes the statistical relationship between the size of the Jewish population and support for the communists but also points to the correlation between the percentage of Belarusians and Ukrainians in a given area and the communist vote.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately Burks's analysis, though pathbreaking for its day, suffers from what in retrospect are serious methodological flaws. First, Burks never "translates" the correlations between the presence of an ethnic group and communist voting into actual votes for the communists. This is important, because even if the presence of an ethnic minority and the communist vote were perfectly correlated, there would not necessarily have to be a one-to-one correspondence across districts between the number of minorities and the number of communist votes. There is no simple way to "read off" from a correlation coefficient how communist support across districts varies with the presence of a given ethnic minority.

The second and more serious problem with the analysis is the mismatch between the types of inferences Burks wants to make concerning the propensity of minorities to support communist parties and the statistical methods he employs. Burks collected aggregate data on the number of minorities and the number of votes parties received across regions and seeks to estimate the unobserved propensity of individual minority voters to support particular parties. He notes the high correlation across regions between the density of national minorities and the popularity of communist parties and concludes that the minorities must have been voting communist. Unfortunately such a conclusion is unwarranted. That national minorities tend to cluster in areas of high communist support does not imply that individual minority voters supported the communists. Burks committed what is known as the "ecological fallacy."

Fortunately there are now better tools for performing such an analysis. We employ the ecological inference model (hereafter, EI) described by Gary King to estimate who voted for whom in the 1922 and 1928 Polish national parliamentary elections.<sup>13</sup> The goal is to estimate the percentage of a given social group that supported a given party or bloc of parties using only census data on social group membership and electoral data

10. André Gerrits, "Antisemitism and Anti-Communism: The Myth of 'Judeo-Communism' in Eastern Europe," *East European Jewish Affairs* 25, no. 1 (1995): 49–72.

11. Janusz Radziejowski, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919–1929* (Edmonton, Alberta, 1983).

12. Burks, *Dynamics*, 223–24.

13. Gary King, *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem: Reconstructing Individual Behavior from Aggregate Data* (Princeton, 1997).

on the number of voters for that party or bloc. As a running example, we will assume the goal is to estimate the percentage of Catholics and non-Catholics supporting communist parties in 1928. Our data are census data on the number of Catholics and electoral data on the number of communist voters in 1928 for each of Poland's districts. The advantage of King's method is that it combines deterministic information about the possible values of the quantity of interest with a statistical model of what the most likely values of that quantity are within that range of possibilities.

EI first computes deterministic bounds on the possible values of the quantity of interest using only the census and electoral data, without statistical assumptions. For example, 49 percent of the district of Hrubieszów's population was Catholic according to the 1921 census, and communist parties received 34 percent of the vote in 1928. Based on these two numbers, we know that 100 percent of the Catholics could not have voted communist, since if they did the communists would have received at least 49 percent of the vote. In fact, even if every vote for the communists in Hrubieszów came from the Catholics, no more than 69 percent ( $34/49$ ) of the Catholics could have voted for the communists. Thus, for this district, the range of possible percentage Catholic support for the communists spans the  $[0,69]$  interval. Similarly, the range of percentage of non-Catholic support would be  $[0,67]$ .

For any given district, the percentages of Catholics and non-Catholics supporting communists are not independent of one another. For example, if we knew that 18 percent of the Catholics supported the communists in Hrubieszów, then using the electoral and census data for that district we could compute the percentage of non-Catholics that supported the communists (49 percent). For each district the possible combinations of percentage Catholic and non-Catholic support for the communists fall on a straight line segment with a slope determined by an algebraic function of the percentage of Catholics and the percentage of the vote received by the communists in that district.<sup>14</sup> Thus, each district has its own line, and the true value for each district of the percentage Catholic and non-Catholic support must fall somewhere on that district's line, which extends from 0 to 100 percent.

EI then narrows the range of possibilities further by assigning a potential value within each range a likelihood of being the true value. If one were to graph these line segments, then, roughly speaking, EI estimates the most likely combination of values for the percentage of Catholics and non-Catholics voting for the communists to be the point where the intersections of the lines is the most dense. Points further away from this center are assigned a lower likelihood of being the true value.<sup>15</sup> EI computes

14. More formally, for every district  $i$ ,  $\beta_i^{nc} = (V_i/(1 - C_i)) - (C_i/(1 - C_i))\beta_i^c$ , where  $\beta_i^{nc}$  is the percentage of non-Catholics supporting communist parties,  $V_i$  is the communists' percentage of the vote,  $C_i$  is the percentage of Catholics in the population, and  $\beta_i^c$  is the percentage of Catholics supporting communist parties.

15. More specifically,  $\beta_i^c$  and  $\beta_i^{nc}$  are drawn from a truncated bivariate normal distribution. The peak of the distribution is centered where the line intersections are the densest. EI's allowance for parameter variation is one of the features that distinguishes it from

the regional percentage of Catholic and non-Catholic communist support (say, in southern Poland) by taking a weighted average (by population) of the individual estimated quantities for each district in the region.<sup>16</sup>

### Census and Election in 1920s Poland

Interwar Poland reemerged from the lands of three defunct empires: the Habsburg, the German, and the Russian.<sup>17</sup> This had two major effects on the functioning and makeup of the new state. The first concerned ethnic Poles themselves. Since Poles had lived for over a century under three very different forms of rule, it was only natural that the political parties and political cultures that emerged would be highly heterogeneous. The Polish authorities themselves understood this and in constructing national statistics not only divided up the country into provinces but also categorized these provinces as western (the former German territories), central (the areas of former Congress Poland), eastern (lands from the Russian empire), or southern (territory from the Habsburg empire). They understood that forging a sense of national unity from among such highly disparate lands, even among ethnic Poles, would not be an easy task.<sup>18</sup>

Second, even if Poland's new leaders desired a unitary nation-state, the country was above all else multinational. Although the victors at Versailles originally envisioned a Poland constituted along ethnic lines, great power politics and Polish military victories in 1919–1920 made for a much larger state. This ensured that at least 30 percent of the country's inhabitants would be ethnically "foreign." The inclusion of eastern Galicia (western Ukraine), much of West Prussia, a large part of Upper Silesia, and the partition of Belarus with the Soviet Union meant that millions of Ukrainians, Belarusians, Jews, Germans, and others would either have to be accommodated, assimilated, or discriminated against within the new Poland. Having signed the Minorities Treaty sponsored by the League of Nations, Poland's political elites committed themselves to the first option, that is, respecting the cultural and political rights of the non-Polish ethnic groups on their territory. Poland's constitution of 1921, especially its articles 110 and 111, guaranteed minority groups equal treatment under the law and the right to establish and run their own religious, cultural, and educational institutions.<sup>19</sup>

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such popular ecological regression techniques as Goodman's regression. See Leo Goodman, "Some Alternatives to Ecological Correlation," *American Journal of Sociology* 64, no. 6 (May 1959): 610–24.

16. For details of the EI method and the statistical assumptions underlying it, see King, *A Solution to the Ecological Inference Problem*. For a shorter overview of EI and some alternatives, see Bradley Palmquist, "Unlocking the Aggregate Data Past—Which Key Fits?" *Historical Methods* 34, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 159–69.

17. On the reconstitution of the Polish state, see Antony Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland* (Oxford, 1972), chap. 1; Jerzy Holzer, *Mozaika polityczna drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Warsaw, 1974); Holzer, *Polska w pierwszej wojnie światowej* (Warsaw, 1967).

18. See the commentary from the first Polish Census of 1921, *Statystyka Polski Serja C* (Warsaw, 1923–27).

19. Reprinted and translated in Stephan Horak, *Poland and Her National Minorities, 1919–1939* (New York, 1961), 196.

In fact, however, all three policies—accommodation, assimilation, and discrimination—were pursued at different times and with different intensity.<sup>20</sup> The nationalities problem was not easy in Poland. Germans found it distasteful to be ruled by a group they considered their cultural inferiors. From the outset, many Ukrainians, having been denied their own state by the Versailles powers and offered only a simulacrum of autonomy in the Soviet Union, rejected the Polish state altogether.<sup>21</sup> A fanatical fraction turned to terrorism and sabotage, provoking a repressive response from Warsaw. Belarusians, by contrast, did not have as well developed a sense of national identity as either Ukrainians or Germans, but they too began to consolidate a group consciousness under the pressure of the Polonization emanating from Warsaw and the allure of potential autonomy offered by their co-nationals across the new border with the Soviet Union. Polish elites felt conflicted between the reality of multinational society and the desire to create a unitary nation-state.

The Polish census of 1921 was an expression of these conflicting imperatives. Because it was carried out quickly under very unfavorable conditions, most experts on the subject agree that the 1921 census produced a flawed picture of the country, especially regarding its actual ethnic composition. The mass movement of people, both those leaving and those returning home, were still underway. Moreover, the Ukrainian population refused to cooperate with census takers, and the official inclination was to incorrectly categorize Ukrainians as Poles or leave them uncounted altogether. Thus, for the category of “nationality,” the results were inaccurate and at least 1 million Ukrainians were miscategorized. The next census, in 1931, was taken after the political elite had already given up on implementing the spirit of the Minorities Treaty. Although this census was conducted by a much more experienced bureaucracy, it was even less accurate regarding the count of minorities. In this census, they used the category of “mother tongue” to get at ethnicity, but in the eastern and southern provinces, census takers used a series of typological tricks (such as separate categories for Ukrainian and “local” languages) to minimize the number of Ukrainians and Belarusians.

Yet, even if the nationality had been recorded accurately, there would still remain the thorny question of self-identification. Asking someone if he or she were a member of the Polish nation, as in 1921, or if his or her mother tongue were Polish, as in 1931, was not necessarily the best way to get at group identification. Many Jews, as demonstrated by the differences in the totals for “Jewish nationality” and “Jewish religion” in 1921, must have given their nationality as Polish. The same applies to the different totals for mother tongue and religion in 1931. And it is widely acknowledged

20. For a partisan but still informative survey, see Stanislaus Mornik, *Polens Kampf gegen seine nichtpolnischen Volksgruppen* (Berlin, 1931).

21. According to Horak’s account, which is sympathetic to the Ukrainian national cause, by spring 1923 “the majority of [the] Galician-Ukrainian population [had] resigned themselves to Polish supremacy. The Ukrainian political parties decided to continue the struggle for national rights on the floor of the *Sejm* and to stress the desire for independence, even when the dark clouds of Polish domination had not completely descended over the Ukraine.” Horak, *Poland and Her National Minorities*, 59.



that many Belarusians did not have a firm sense of their identity outside of religious affiliation (Orthodox). These considerations suggest that it is very difficult to establish the actual ethnic composition of the country. Both problems of administrative chicanery and the fluidity of national identities require us to use some ingenuity in deriving a reasonable picture of the ethnic makeup of interwar Poland.

Following the pathbreaking work of Jerzy Tomaszewski, we use data on religion (except for Germans, where the census results were, for the most part, accurate) to infer ethnic composition.<sup>22</sup> This inference is justified on a number of grounds. First, contemporary observers noted that census takers reported religious affiliation; these results were not falsified at upper levels.<sup>23</sup> Second, ethnic groups in interwar Poland correspond fairly closely to religious affiliation. Poles tended to be Catholic, Jews tended to be of the Jewish faith, Ukrainians in eastern Galicia were overwhelmingly Uniates (Greek Catholic), and Belarusians were almost entirely Orthodox. In a handful of districts, especially in Volhynia, two districts of Polesia, and several districts surrounding Chełm where a significant number of Orthodox Ukrainians resided, there remained difficulties using religion to infer ethnicity. Fortunately these communities are easily identifiable from the census data because the districts in question are the only ones where the Orthodox inhabitants far outnumber the Belarusians. Table 1 shows a sample of these districts. Note that the numbers in this table are percentages, so that in the Volhynian district of Równe, for example, where the census lists 68 percent of the inhabitants as Orthodox and 65 percent as Ukrainian, only .04 percent (88 inhabitants) are recorded as being Uniate and only .05 percent of inhabitants are listed as being Belarusian (100 inhabitants). The numbers indicate that in Równe there most likely resided only a handful of Uniate Ukrainians and Belarusian Orthodox. It is important to remember that the data on nationality are provided not to present an accurate reflection of the numbers of Ukrainians and Belarusians in a given district (which they do not) but to show that Ukrainians and Belarusians did not generally live side by side and can therefore be separated for analytical purposes even when data on religion are used to infer ethnicity.

In addition, a small or moderate number of Catholic Ukrainians, Catholic Belarusians, Orthodox Poles, Orthodox Russians, and Catholic Lithuanians will remain miscategorized.<sup>24</sup> But the numbers here are relatively small and our units are large enough so that, again following Tomaszewski, the anomalies tend to cancel each other out (that is, the number of Catholic Ukrainians in a district is roughly equal to the number of Orthodox Poles). As a final check, we also use data compiled by Polish au-

22. Jerzy Tomaszewski, "Robotnicy Białorusini w latach 1919–1938 w Polsce," *Acta Baltico Slavica*, 1967, no. 5:95–112; Tomaszewski, "The National Structure of the Working Class in the South-Eastern Part of Poland 1921–1939," *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 1968, no. 19:89–111; Zbigniew Landau and Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Robotnicy przemysłowi w Polsce: Materialne warunki bytu 1918–1939* (Warsaw, 1971), 95.

23. Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Rzeczpospolita wielu narodów* (Warsaw, 1985), 25–37.

24. Miscategorizing Catholic Lithuanians would be a serious problem if we were attempting to estimate their voting behavior, but since we do not do this in this article, it does not affect our analysis.

**Table 1**  
**Sample Districts with Orthodox Ukrainians, 1921**  
 (all numbers in percent)

Region	District	Orthodox	Uniate	Ukrainian	Belarusan
Volhynia	Równe	68	.04	65	.05
Volhynia	Krzemieniec	84	.02	78	.01
Volhynia	Dubno	81	.04	78	.01
Polesia	Kamień-Koszyrski	92	.008	70	.01
Polesia	Sarny	79	.004	70	.003

*Source: Statystyka Polski, Serja C.*

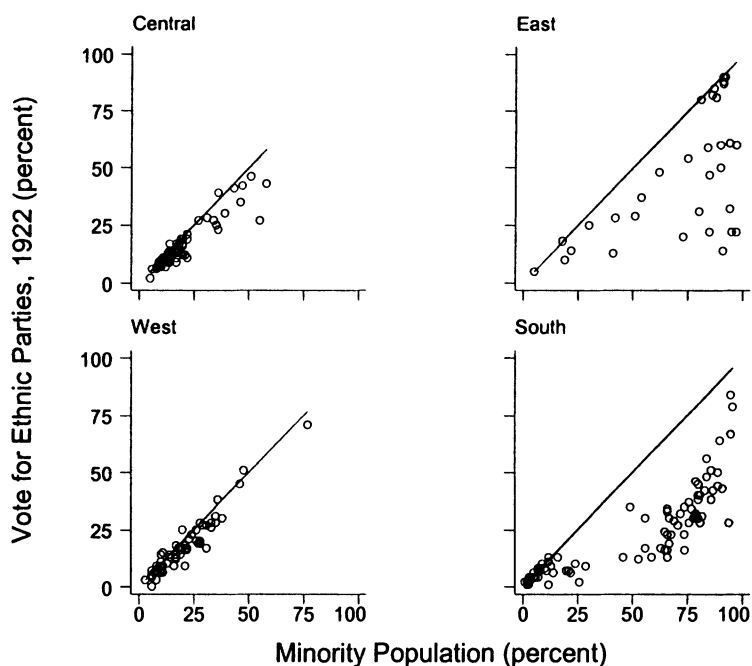
thorities in 1926, for districts identical to the 1921 and 1931 censuses, on the language of school children.<sup>25</sup> The logic here is that the proportion of school children speaking a certain language should coincide with the proportion of a given ethnic group in the population at large. Use of either census or school data does not qualitatively alter our analysis of either the 1922 or 1928 elections. Summary statistics for both nationality and religious groups appear in Appendix 1.

### Who Voted for Whom in 1922 and 1928?

The 1922 election took place before the eastern borders of the country were settled in the minds of many Ukrainians and while the question of Upper Silesia remained open.<sup>26</sup> The electoral system, based on a modified system of proportional representation, made it relatively easy for small, regional parties to gain entry to the lower house, the Sejm. As a consequence, many different ethnic and regional parties contested the election. At least four ethnic Ukrainian parties and seven ethnic Jewish parties competed, and these were complemented by a plethora of regional, class-based, and multiethnic parties. Because there were so many parties, and many of these had ideologically similar profiles, we simplify the analysis by grouping parties into blocs. A list of the parties within each bloc can be found in Appendix 2. Although evidence suggests that many Ukrainians boycotted the election, scholars consider this election to be generally free and fair. The results certainly reflect the very diverse political makeup of the new state. The minority parties, led by the Blok Mniejszości Narodowych (Bloc of National Minorities), received 21.6 percent of the popular vote, for a total of 89 out of 444 parliamentary seats. The Communist Party received a modest 1.4 percent of the vote, while the nonrevolutionary

25. See Marjan Falski, *Wyniki spisu dzieci z czerwca 1926 roku w zastosowaniu do badania potrzeb szkolnictwa powszechnego* (Warsaw, 1928).

26. From the standpoint of international law, the borders had been more or less settled by the Treaty of Riga in 1921 and by the 15 March 1923 Council of Ambassadors' full recognition of Polish sovereignty over eastern Galicia in reference to the (June 1919) Minorities Treaty. Notwithstanding this recognition, it appears that many Ukrainians held out the hope that the status of eastern Galicia (or, as the Ukrainians preferred, western Ukraine) might someday be revisited by the League of Nations.



**Figure 1. Correlation between a District's Minority Population and the Vote Received by Ethnic Parties, 1922.**

left, dominated by the Polska Partia Socjalistyczna (Polish Socialist Party) and the left-agrarian Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe-Wyzwolenie (Liberation Party), garnered nearly 24 percent of the vote. The political center, consisting mainly of the Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe "Piast" (Piast), the Partia Centrum (Polish Center), and the Narodowa Partia Robotnicza (National Workers' Party), received roughly 22 percent of the vote. The right, dominated by the Chrześcijański-Związek Jedności Narodowej (Christian Alliance of National Unity), which included the National Democrats, Christian Democrats, and Christian National Party, won a plurality of roughly 30 percent and was the only political grouping to win significant support in every region of the country. We include countrywide vote totals for major blocs in both 1922 and 1928 in Appendix 1.

Even in 1922 Poland's electorate appeared ethnically polarized. Figure 1 displays scatter plots of the relationship between the proportion of a given district's minority population and the vote received by ethnic parties in that district. The figure contains four panels, one for each of Poland's major regions. Each district is indicated by an "o." The diagonal lines indicate where the proportion of an ethnic minority in a district is exactly equal to the vote for ethnic parties. Thus, if a district appears below the diagonal line, then ethnic parties received fewer votes than they would have gotten had all ethnic groups supported ethnic parties. If a district appears above the line, then ethnic parties did better than the proportion of minorities would warrant. Evidence for ethnic polarization is strongest in western and central Poland. In each case the correlation be-

tween the presence of ethnic groups and the vote for ethnic parties is greater than 0.9. The case of polarization in western Poland is probably best explained by the Germans, who were reluctant to integrate themselves into Polish politics and society, and the strength of the nationalist right, which was eager to have ethnic Poles replace Germans as the economic and cultural elite in the region.

In the south and east there is far more heterogeneity. The lower and more to the right a district appears in a given panel, the more the minorities in that district supported parties other than ethnic ones. In the east the principal competitor for the ethnic vote appears to have been the left. In highly ethnic areas where ethnic parties performed relatively poorly, such as Baranowice, Drohiczyn, Luniniec, Pińsk, and Pruzana, leftist parties received 59 percent or more of the vote. This is one piece of evidence that some of the Orthodox, who were concentrated in the east, were already gravitating toward leftist parties. In the south it was primarily the center and less so the right-wing parties causing the “dip” in minority party support in mixed districts (between approximately 50 percent and 85 percent minority). The left held little allure either for the Ukrainians, who comprised the most important ethnic group in this region, or for the Poles.

The panels in figure 1 are highly suggestive, yet they do not give us a complete picture of partisan divisions within the electorate in 1922. We present our EI estimates of the social sources of all blocs’ electoral support below in table 2. Each column identifies a major party or bloc of parties. Each row identifies a major social group. The numbers in the table represent the estimated percentage of the voters of a given social group that vote for a party or bloc. Thus, for example, we estimate that 65 percent of the Jews (that voted) supported minority parties, 2 percent supported center parties, and 18 percent voted for nonrevolutionary leftist parties.

Like all statistical estimates, these have errors associated with them. Specifically, there are two types of errors. The first is the conventional error resulting from having only a finite number of observations. We report the standard errors associated with each estimate in parentheses. The second source of error arises from our particular estimation method. In principle the percentages in each row should add up to 100 percent. For example, if 65 percent of the Jews supported minority parties, then 35 percent must have supported other parties. The proportions of a social group’s vote are like pieces of a pie—they must ultimately add up to one. A cursory glance at this table reveals that none of the row percentages sum to 100 percent. Part of the problem is that the blocs presented in this table do not include all the parties that obtained votes. Some parties could not be categorized properly or only contested certain areas. More important, however, we obtained each estimate independently of every other. For example, we estimated Orthodox support for the nonrevolutionary left without taking into account that 76 percent of the Orthodox were already estimated to be voting for other blocs. Thus, there was no statistical constraint on the estimated values, yielding row marginals that could be above or below 100 percent. We leave the joint estimation of all quantities as a

**Table 2**  
**Estimated Group Vote in 1922**  
 (in percent)

	Nonrevolutionary				
	Communist	Left	Center	Minorities	Right
Jews	4 (1) *	18 (1)	2 (1)	65 (3)	4 (1)
Ukrainians	3 (.6)	2 (2)	1 (1)	77 (4)	5 (2)
Orthodox	8 (.4)	37 (3)	1 (.3)	66 (2)	1 (.4)
Catholics	2 (.2)	29 (1)	25 (1)	4 (.3)	39 (.4)

\*Standard error in parentheses.

task for future research.<sup>27</sup> Fortunately the resultant errors are small in comparison with the differences in level of support within a given group for particular blocs. Consider the Catholic vote. Even taking into account the estimation error, we would still be confident in saying that Catholics vastly preferred the nonrevolutionary left (29 percent) to the minority parties (4 percent), even if the difference in support is not precisely 25 percentage points. Hereafter we will refer to individual percentages in these tables, with the understanding that each of these estimates entails an error.<sup>28</sup>

Table 2 represents the first attempt to provide systematic statistical estimates of minority voting behavior for any of Poland's interwar national parliamentary elections. The most striking outcome is that the minority parties received the lion's share of the minority vote. Support ranges from 65 percent among Jews to almost 80 percent of Galician Ukrainians.<sup>29</sup> Although the Polish constitution and the 1919 treaty with the Allied powers guaranteed the minorities the right to preserve their languages and their national identities, in practice the chauvinism and incompetence of Polish officials often served to exacerbate tensions between Poles and minorities.<sup>30</sup> It should thus not be surprising that the minorities preferred

27. Such a method has been proposed by Ori Rosen, Wenxin Jiang, Gary King, and Martin A. Tanner, "Bayesian and Frequentist Inference for Ecological Inference: The RXC Case," *Statistica Neerlandica* 55, no. 2 (2001): 134–56. But this technique places much greater demands on the data, since many more parameters have to be estimated. It is not feasible at the district level, though it would be possible if the data were disaggregated by settlement. We are currently gathering these data.

28. Jews and Catholics dwelled throughout interwar Poland, so the estimates for these groups were computed using the full database wherever possible. In some cases, due to lack of data, western districts are excluded. The Ukrainian estimates are based on Galician districts, and the Orthodox on eastern, or eastern and central districts, depending on the availability of observations and the stability of the estimates. In no case were there significant discrepancies between estimates derived just from eastern districts and those attained by combining eastern and central districts. We compensated for the Ukrainian boycott of the 1922 election by using EI to estimate the turnout rate among Ukrainians for each district and by weighting the census data by the estimated turnout. The estimates of minority support for the Right were obtained using the proportion of the district population that was Catholic as a covariate.

29. Hereafter by "Ukrainians" we mean Galician (Uniate) Ukrainians, unless specifically noted otherwise.

30. See Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland*, 139–40.

minority parties. Polarization between Catholics and minorities is also strongly visible. The center and right received 64 percent of the Catholic vote, but only 14 percent of the minority vote.

The estimates in table 2 represent national averages. Such quantities effectively communicate the aggregate level of group support for particular blocs, but they cannot capture the regional variation. We might expect great variation given that Poland was reconstituted from pieces of very different empires. For Catholics this is indeed the case. While the minority parties received roughly 9 percent of the Catholic vote in western Poland, in eastern and central Poland they received only 1 percent.<sup>31</sup> Catholic support for the right ranged from 40 percent in eastern and central Poland to only 16 percent in the south. Jewish political preferences were far more regionally uniform, largely ranging between 2 percent and 4 percent for both the communists and the center parties. This uniformity is intriguing when compared with the diversity of the Catholic (Polish) vote. Like Poles themselves, Poland's Jews had entered the Polish state as former Russian, German, or Habsburg imperial subjects. In contrast to the Poles, however, the fissures within the Jewish community were a product not so much of the type of imperial rule, as of the relationship between the Jewish community and the modern world. This divide between the choices of political assimilation, Zionism, religious orthodoxy, or communism existed across Poland, our numbers suggest, in fairly equal proportions and the weights between these proportions shifted evenly across regions over time. Why this should be true across the remnants of such diverse empires we leave as a topic for future research.

Poland's political institutions exacerbated the polarized politics that emerged during the 1922 election campaign.<sup>32</sup> The constitution of March 1921, drafted primarily by anti-Piłsudski forces on the right, established a weak presidency and a strong parliament. The electoral rules were strongly proportional, with the larger parties benefiting marginally from extra seats apportioned to "national lists." The result of this system of transforming votes into seats was a highly fragmented body that could not easily form a stable governing majority.

Perhaps the thorniest issue in coalition politics was the legislative strength of the parties representing national minorities that had been elected as part of the Bloc of National Minorities. "Polish" parties, for their part, refused to form a government with any minority party or parliamentary club, and in fact there was not to be one non-Polish cabinet minister in interwar Poland.<sup>33</sup> The exclusion of minority deputies from policy making, however, meant that the implementation of the Minorities

31. A large portion of this vote in western Poland probably came from German Catholics.

32. On the origins and consequences of Poland's interwar institutional choices, see Michael Bernhard, "Institutional Choice and the Failure of Democracy: The Case of Interwar Poland," *East European Politics and Societies* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 35–59.

33. It is true, however, that the nonparty Sikorski government received support from both Ukrainian and Belarusan parties, an important indication of the potential for inter-ethnic cooperation in interwar Poland.

Treaty would be left solely in the hands of ethnically Polish politicians. The result was a less than adequate protection of cultural and educational rights for the country's Germans, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Jews. Although some elements of Poland's pre-1918 political elite had discussed quasi-federal arrangements and regional autonomy for Poland's minorities, these plans were set aside after 1922 and the political elite went about the business of constructing a unitary state. It was only natural then that Soviet propaganda during the 1920s should try to convince Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Jews that their national aspirations could be better realized and their cultures better protected in the union republics across the Soviet frontier.<sup>34</sup>

Excluding the minority parties from government also meant that a parliamentary majority would have to be cobbled together from a combination of the nationalist right, the peasant center, and the nonrevolutionary left (both urban and rural), political forces that did not easily cooperate. Between 1922 and 1926 Poland was governed by a series of fragile and short-lived coalition governments. Personal animosities among party leaders complicated coalition building. Endemic corruption among inexperienced parliamentarians simply worsened the problem. Perhaps most crippling, however, were the economic difficulties encountered during the early 1920s. Budgetary shortfalls both contributed to and were exacerbated by first inflation and then hyperinflation. Street demonstrations and industrial unrest in 1923 and 1924, along with the foreign example of Benito Mussolini's March on Rome, lent credence to the widespread sentiment that parliament could not govern Poland effectively.<sup>35</sup>

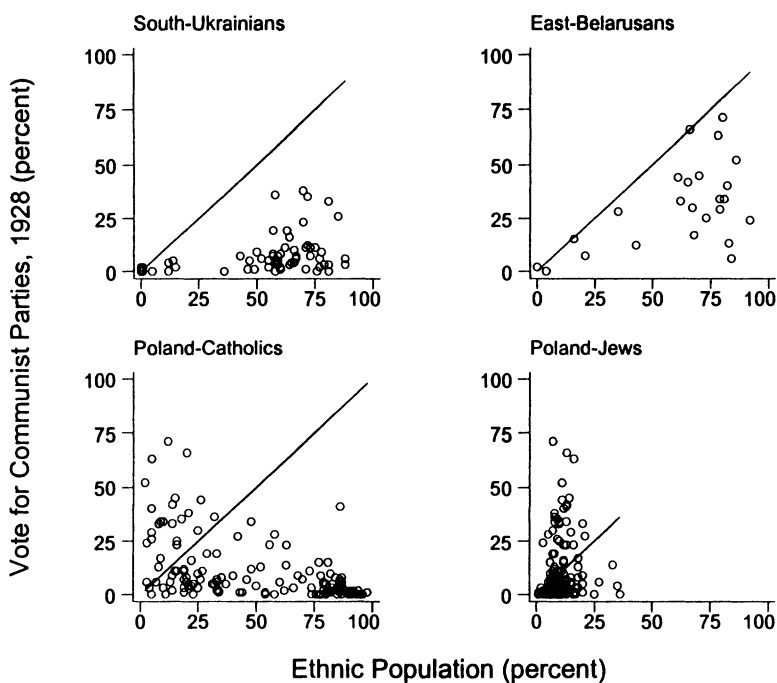
In 1926, amid growing discontent with parliamentary government and street protests, Józef Piłsudski and his supporters staged a coup d'état.<sup>36</sup> Even after the military seizure of power, however, Piłsudski was not ready to break completely with democratic institutions. In 1928 Poland's second parliamentary elections were held. Piłsudski wanted these elections in order to gain a parliamentary majority for his pro-government bloc. The vote took place under the watchful eye of the state; nevertheless, by the standards of the day, the election was, for the most part, fair. Only in a few of the eastern provinces were large numbers of votes invalidated by zealous local authorities. These were, it appears, primarily the ballots of Belarusian communist voters. In the end, communist parties probably received 10 percent of the vote nationally, with this number reduced through administrative measures to 7.5 percent.<sup>37</sup> Evidence of the relative fairness of

34. Cycles of discrimination, repression, and violence plagued both eastern Galicia and Poland's eastern territories throughout the mid-to-late 1920s. See M. Felinski, *The Ukrainians in Poland* (London, 1931). Soviet propaganda was especially effective among Belarusians; see Nicholas P. Vakar, *Belorussia: The Making of a Nation* (Cambridge Mass., 1956), 125–27.

35. Joseph Rothschild, *Piłsudski's Coup d'Etat* (New York, 1966).

36. *Ibid.*

37. The Communist Party had been outlawed in 1924 but its adherents continued to run in a number of front organizations that are widely identifiable in the literature on the interwar period. An extensive analysis of these front organizations is undertaken for eastern Poland in Radziejowski, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine*.



**Figure 2. Correlation between a District's Ethnic Population and the Vote Received by Communist Parties, 1928.**

these elections is that Piłsudski's pro-government bloc received just over 21 percent of the vote and under 30 percent of the parliamentary seats. Piłsudski's main nemesis, the nationalist right, received nearly 9 percent of the vote. Piłsudski was not able to obtain a parliamentary majority until the completely "managed" elections of 1930.

The panels in figure 2 display scatter plots of the relationship between the presence of ethnic groups in a district and the communist vote in 1928. The top panels illustrate regional correlations for Ukrainian and Orthodox voters; the bottom panels show national correlations for Catholics and Jews, both of which were spread throughout Poland. As for figure 1, each district is indicated by an "o." The diagonal lines indicate where the proportion of an ethnic minority in a district is exactly equal to the vote for communist parties. Communist success in eastern districts is clearly visible in the top right panel, with four districts giving greater than 50 percent support. The general Ukrainian distaste for communist parties is visible in the top left panel. Most districts with more than 50 percent Ukrainians are located well below the diagonal line, indicating that the communist parties were not receiving their "fair share" of the Ukrainian vote. Indeed, the fact that virtually every district is beneath the line indicates that even if the communist parties drew their entire vote from Ukrainians, the vast majority of Ukrainians were supporting other parties. The scatter plot of communist support in disproportionately Jewish districts across Poland in the bottom right panel displays a quite different pattern from that in Ukrainian districts. In this case there are many dis-



**Table 3**  
**Estimated Group Vote in 1928**  
 (in percent)

1928	Communist	Non- revolutionary Left	Progovern- ment Bloc (BBWR)	Minorities	Right
Jews	7 (1)	4 (3)	49 (3)	33 (5)	3 (1)
Ukrainians	12 (1)	1 (.3)	30 (1)	71 (2)	3 (1)
Orthodox	44 (2)	4 (1)	40 (1)	21 (3)	1 (.4)
Catholics	4 (1)	45 (.1)	16 (.3)	4 (.4)	15 (1)

\*Standard error in parentheses.

tricts that fall above the diagonal line. In these areas, many of which are in the east, communist support exceeded the proportion of Jews in the district. This pattern is consistent with a wide range of Jewish support for the communists, from no support to 100 percent. But even if every single Jew supported the communists (which, as table 3 shows, is far from the truth), there had to be significant support among other minority groups. The predominance of eastern districts among the largest communist supporters points to the Belarusians as the other reservoir of communist votes. Significantly, three of the most Jewish municipalities in Poland, *Lwów* (4 percent communist support, 35 percent Jewish), *Warsaw* (14 percent communist support, 33 percent Jewish), and *Wilno* (5 percent communist support, 36 percent Jewish), fall below the diagonal. For comparison with the minorities, the pattern of communist support in Catholic areas for all of Poland is displayed in the bottom left panel. There is little correlation between the presence of Catholics and the communist vote, with anticommunism particularly strong in the homogeneous Catholic districts at the lower right part of the panel. The one obvious exception, *Będzin* (41 percent communist support, 86 percent Catholic), is an overwhelmingly working-class district.

We present our estimates of minority voting in 1928 in table 3.<sup>38</sup> This table should dispel the notion that one can speak in the abstract of a uniform "minority" vote. Support for minority parties varies much more widely across ethnic groups than it did in 1922. These parties claimed only about one-fifth of Orthodox support but received nearly three-quarters of the (Galician) Ukrainian vote. Support for the pro-government bloc is almost as disparate, with somewhat fewer than a third of the Ukrainians and nearly half of the Jews casting their vote for Piłsudski. The votes of individual groups also vary quite strikingly over time as well. Whereas

38. As before, Jewish and Catholic estimates are obtained using the full database whenever possible. The estimates of Jewish support for the right pertain only to Galicia and central Poland, and estimates of Jewish support for the nonrevolutionary left pertain only to eastern and central Poland. Orthodox estimates pertain only to the eastern or eastern and central districts, and (Galician) Ukrainian only to the south.

Ukrainians gravitated toward the minority parties between 1922 and 1928, during the same period the Jews and Orthodox moved away from them. Support for the nonrevolutionary left among Orthodox voters dropped from 37 percent in 1922 to only 4 percent in 1928.

What does this table tell us about the propensity of ethnically marginal groups to support the communists? Contrary to Burks and many other scholars, such support is highly differentiated. Support ranges from merely 7 percent of Jews and 12 percent of Ukrainians to 44 percent of Orthodox voters. This high level of communist support among the Orthodox is particularly striking in view of the 8 percent support they gave in 1922. A number of reasons may explain why a large proportion of Orthodox Belarusians supported the communists by 1928. First, there was systematic discrimination in the eastern parts of Poland. Since the eastern territories were densely populated with minorities, the Polish state attempted to exclude these areas from full political participation, fearing they would capture power proportionate to their population.<sup>39</sup> Second, by 1928 the Soviet Union was actively backing separatism among the Orthodox Belarusians in eastern Poland, and the Polish communists at the time were largely pro-Soviet. The Belarusians did not have a well-developed national movement at the time and thus could reasonably have preferred the pro-Soviet communist party, with its promise of autonomy within the Soviet Union, to the Belarusian ethnic parties in the Bloc of National Minorities.<sup>40</sup> Third, it is perhaps not all that surprising that a population comprised primarily of Orthodox peasants, even if still prenational in orientation, ultimately felt some affinity for their east Slavic co-religionists in the Soviet Union.

How much of the Orthodox communist vote in 1928 was Belarusian? In a number of areas of Polesia and Volhynia that were overwhelmingly inhabited by Orthodox Ukrainians, communist parties, especially the Ukrainian Sel-Rob Left, received strong electoral support in 1928. On average, these parties received 25 percent of the vote in the six predominantly Orthodox Ukrainian districts in eastern Poland where they ran in 1928, below what we have estimated the Orthodox vote for the communists as a whole to be, but far above the estimated communist vote among Uniate Ukrainians.<sup>41</sup> This suggests two things. First, the vote for the communists among Belarusians was probably higher than our estimated 44 percent for Orthodox voters as a whole (because the communist vote among Orthodox Ukrainians was certainly a good deal less than this number). Since the majority of districts in eastern Poland were heavily Belarusian, we can safely say that the dramatic shift over time in Orthodox support from minority parties to the communists is evidence that the combination

39. Holzer, *Mozaika polityczna*, 254–58; Tomaszewski, *Rzeczpospolita wielu*, 105–34.

40. Note also that, as in table 2, the row percentages do not add up to 100 percent, reflecting estimation error. For details, see the discussion following table 2.

41. Łuck, Równe, Krzemieniec, Dubno, Kamień-Koszyrski, and Sarny. These districts were all between 70 and 80 percent Ukrainian Orthodox. The Communists also did better than average in several disproportionately Orthodox Ukrainian districts in and around Chełm.

of Polish discrimination and Soviet interference in Poland's affairs succeeded in radicalizing Belarusian politics.<sup>42</sup> Second, since the communists did much better in many Orthodox Ukrainian districts than in Uniate Ukrainian areas, this provides further evidence that among Ukrainians and Belarusians in interwar Poland religious affiliation and identity exercised an important influence that sometimes, if not always, competed successfully with nationality in shaping political preferences and behavior.<sup>43</sup>

From the viewpoint of internal Polish politics, the Galician Ukrainians' low support for the communists in 1928 remains a paradox. They were also a large minority and would thus have experienced discrimination just as the Belarusians did. Yet only 12 percent of them voted for the communists. In stark contrast with the Belarusians, roughly three-quarters of Ukrainians supported minority parties. The likely reasons for this provide an object lesson in how different historical experiences may lead to radically different politics. Whereas Belarusians had lived in the socially and politically backward Russian empire, the Uniate Ukrainians were from the considerably more developed Austro-Hungarian empire and had a far more developed national movement than the Belarusians or even their Orthodox co-nationals.<sup>44</sup> Whereas Orthodox Belarusians or Ukrainians could view Russians as their cultural and political equals, by 1928 Uniate Ukrainians probably looked upon a potential unification with the Soviet Union with more distaste than they viewed remaining within a discriminatory Poland.<sup>45</sup> The Ukrainians were, to be sure, unhappy with their treatment by the Polish state—only 30 percent of them supported the pro-government bloc in 1928. But whereas the Belarusians chose to register their dissatisfaction by voting communist, the more nationally self-conscious Ukrainians became strong supporters of their national parties in the minorities' bloc.

The biggest surprise is the political behavior of the Jews. As we mentioned in the introduction, there is a myth in Poland that, more than any other minority, the Jews were (and are) the bulwarks of communism at the mass level, and that even if not all Jews were communists, at least all communists were probably Jews. We hope the data in table 3 can put to rest the claim that the Jews were the major supporters of the communists.

42. According to Vakar, between 1925 and 1928 the Soviet-supported Belarusian Peasants' and Workers' Association, the *Rabotnickaja Hramada*, enrolled over 100,000 members from all social classes in eastern Poland. See Vakar, *Belorussia*, 126.

43. It is, of course, important to condition this interpretation on differences in socioeconomic structure across districts. We leave this for future research.

44. On Galician Ukrainian national identity, see the relevant essays in Andrei S. Markovits and Frank E. Sysyn, eds., *Nationbuilding and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982); also Keely Stauter-Halsted, *The Nation in the Village: The Genesis of Peasant National Identity in Austrian Poland, 1848–1914* (Ithaca, 2001); John-Paul Himka, *Religion and Nationality in Western Ukraine: The Greek Catholic Church and the Ruthenian National Movement in Galicia, 1867–1900* (Montreal, 1999). On the settlement structure of Ukrainians within Galicia, see Tomaszewski, "National Structure." On the Ukrainian National Movement, see Paul Robert Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Seattle, 1996), 351–84, 436–59; Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto, 2000), 201–335. On Belarusians, see Vakar, *Belorussia*, 1–92.

45. Horak hints at this as well. Horak, *Poland and Her National Minorities*, 59.

Only 7 percent of Jewish voters supported the communists in 1928. Thus, even at the height of the communist appeal—before Iosif Stalin established absolute power and Marxism became equated in the popular mind with terror—fewer than 10 percent of the Jews voted communist. This estimate remains fairly uniform across regions and represents less than one-fifth the level of support the Orthodox gave the communists. Along with the nonrevolutionary left and the nationalist right, the communist bloc was the Jews' least favorite political grouping.

If not all Jews voted communists, then did most of the communist vote come from Jews?<sup>46</sup> Table 3 does not provide an estimate of the fraction of communist voters who are Jews, but we used EI to obtain this quantity as well. For Poland as a whole roughly 14 percent of the communist vote came from Jews. By contrast, again for Poland as a whole, 18 percent of the communist vote came from Catholics. In central and eastern Poland 43 percent of the communist vote came from Belarusians, and in the south Ukrainians made up 46 percent of communist voters. Jews were no more communist than the Catholic Poles, and far less so than the Belarusians or Ukrainians. Even if Jews were prominent in the Communist Party leadership, this prominence did not translate into support at the mass level.

Related to the myth of the “Jewish communist” is the perception that the Jews of Poland resisted integrating themselves into Polish political life, that they lived *in* the Polish state but were not *of* it. Our data tell a different story. The proportion of Jewish voters supporting minority parties fell from roughly two-thirds in 1922 to one-third in 1928. Moreover, 49 percent of Jews voted for Piłsudski's pro-government bloc in 1928. Even in the face of both public and private prejudice, the Jews were showing their willingness to integrate themselves politically into Polish society. Indeed, as the vote for the pro-government bloc in table 3 illustrates, in proportional terms the Jews provided greater support than any other ethnic group for “the establishment.” Catholics themselves, overwhelmingly of Polish nationality, gave only 16 percent of their vote to Piłsudski's bloc. Thus, quite contrary to expectation, the Jews were not only among the biggest supporters of the government among minorities, they were three times as supportive as the Poles themselves! A conventional interpretation of these numbers would emphasize that so many Jews voted for Piłsudski because they viewed him as a protector in an atmosphere of increasing national tensions. This may be true. An alternative interpretation, however, is that a good number of Piłsudski's Jewish supporters wanted to integrate themselves into Polish politics, if they were not excluded by definition. Our data suggest therefore that between 1922 and 1928 Poland's Jews were increasingly politically assimilated.

As cultural minorities within a unitary Poland, Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Jews were confronted with a dilemma about their future. How

46. The book that provides much of the “evidence” for this assertion, not only at the organizational but also at the mass level, is the frequently cited account of Jan Alfred Reguła, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski w świetle faktów i dokumentów* (Warsaw, 1934).

best to react to a “nationalizing” state?<sup>47</sup> The types of reactions available to all three groups can be neatly summarized under Albert Hirschman’s well-known triad of “exit, voice, and loyalty,” by which he meant that in both politics and markets people generally have three kinds of strategies for dealing with poorly performing “firms” and “states.” First, dissatisfied consumers or citizens may abandon the firm or state in favor of another—the “exit” strategy. Second, they may offer their opinion and try to get the firm or state to change its behavior without abandoning it altogether, which Hirschman summarizes under the rubric of “voice.” Third, under certain circumstances, dissatisfied consumers or citizens will continue to support a firm or state, especially if either has some intrinsic value, a strategy that Hirschman labeled “loyalty.”<sup>48</sup>

Although the Belarusians, Ukrainians, and Jews cannot be said to have pursued any of these strategies exclusively, the evidence presented here shows that between 1922 and 1928 one strategy increasingly dominated each group’s political behavior. In the six years between the two elections, Poland’s Belarusians opted largely for revolutionary communism, the ultimate “exit” strategy in that it offered both an exit from Poland and from international capitalism. Lacking a solidly developed sense of national identity, the ersatz national institutions offered by the Soviet Union appealed to a people who had little chance of competing successfully for resources and power within the Polish state. Ukrainians, by contrast, had few compelling options. Unwilling to choose the revolutionary internationalism of the Soviet Union or the assimilating nationalism of Poland, the Ukrainians turned increasingly to the “voice” of ethno-nationalist politics. Finally, the Jews, when offered a modicum of acceptance, were ready to show their loyalty to the Polish state in increasing numbers. Lacking a territorial homeland near Poland or, realistically, within the Soviet Union, such a strategy made sense because it offered many Jews, even those who saw themselves as culturally distinct, the prospect of political assimilation. When viewed in a broader European perspective, Jewish voting behavior in interwar Poland may not be surprising at all. As supporters of Piłsudski, the bulk of Poland’s Jews were following a longer Jewish political tradition of supporting the powers that be.

Our research has shown that the idea of the “Jewish communist” is a myth at the mass level. Roughly 93 percent of Jewish voters supported noncommunist parties in 1928, and only around 14 percent of the communists’ electoral support came from Jews. Thus not only were most Jews not communists, but most communists were not Jews. Indeed, roughly half of the Jewish electorate supported the pro-government bloc in 1928. Most Jews were thus politically neither “internationalist” nor ethnically exclusionary, as a large vote for the minority parties in 1928 would have indicated. Rather they were casting their lot with the Polish state.

47. This is how Rogers Brubaker characterizes interwar Poland; see Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge Eng., 1996), 84.

48. Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970).

Our data do not speak to whether Jews were disproportionately represented among the leadership of interwar Poland's communist parties.<sup>49</sup> Yet even if this were true—and much more research is needed to prove such an assertion—the ethnically nonexclusionary electoral behavior of Poland's Jews becomes even more striking: it means the Jews did not vote communist even when their co-ethnics were leading the communist parties. Our data also do not address Jewish or other minority involvement in the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland in the aftermath of the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939 or how the rise of Nazism in Germany and Stalin's dictatorship in the Soviet Union affected internal Polish politics. We have shown, however, that whatever happened in the 1930s, and whoever was leading the communist parties, through 1928 the political loyalty of the bulk of Jews was Poland's to lose.

The idea of Judeo-communism has constituted one of the main pillars of modern anti-Semitism and continues to live on in political discourse throughout the postcommunist world, even in places where few Jews remain. André Gerrits characterizes it as one of the “most potent myths of the twentieth century.”<sup>50</sup> We agree, and we hope that our findings go some way toward laying that myth to rest.

49. For a fascinating discussion of Poland's Jewish Communists, see Jaff Schatz, *The Generation: The Rise and Fall of the Jewish Communists of Poland* (Berkeley, 1991).

50. Gerrits, “Antisemitism,” 49.

**Appendix 1: Summary Statistics***Ethnic and Religious Groups, 1921*

Nationality	Number	Percentage
Poles	17,800,000	69
Germans	931,423	4
Jews	2,056,179	8
Ukrainians	3,734,548	15
Belarusans	976,765	4
TOTAL	25,700,000	98
Religion		
Catholics	16,300,000	64
Uniates	2,986,891	12
Orthodox	2,534,609	10
Protestants	979,196	4
Jews	2,758,616	11
TOTAL	25,600,000	99

Source: *Statystyka Polski, Serja C*

*Party Blocs, 1922*

Bloc	Votes	Percentage
Right	2,547,919	34
Center	1,847,187	25
Nonrevolutionary Left	1,182,725	16
Minorities	1,794,652	24
Communist	120,432	2 (1.6)
TOTAL	7,492,915	100

Source: *Statistique des Elections à la Diète et au Sénat: Effectuées le 5 et le 12 Novembre 1922* (Warsaw, 1926)

*Party Blocs, 1928*

Bloc	Votes	Percentages
Pro-government Bloc	2,728,727	28
Nonrevolutionary Left	2,929,590	30
Communist and Pro-Soviet	726,919	8 (7.5)
Right	968,631	10
Minorities	2,284,771	24
TOTAL	9,638,638	98

Source: *Statystyka wyborów do Sejmu i Senatu, odbytych w dniu 4 i 11 marca 1928 roku* (Warsaw, 1930).

## Appendix 2. Party Blocs in 1922 and 1928

### 1922

*Right:* Christian Alliance of National Unity (National Democrats, Christian Democrats, and Christian National Party); National Union of the State; State Alliance of the Eastern Territories; Polish Conservatives.

*Center:* Polish Peasant Party (Piast); Polish Center; Bourgeois Center; National Workers Party.

*Nonrevolutionary Left:* Liberation Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe-Wyzwolenie); Polish Socialist Party (PPS); People's Councils; Peasant Party-Left Wing; Radical Peasant Party; Association for the Protection of Labor; Independent Socialists of Poland; Independent Socialists of Eastern Galicia; Union of Polish Women.

*Communist:* Communist Union of Urban and Rural Proletariat; Communist Party of Upper Silesia.

*Minorities' Lists:* Bloc of National Minorities; Committee of the Unified Jewish National Party; Jewish National Union; Jewish Democratic National Bloc; Chilborobi (pro-Polish Ukrainians); General Jewish Workers Association of Poland; Poale Zion; Jewish National Unity Party; Committee of Independent Ukrainian Peasants; Agrarian Party of Ukrainian Peasants.

### 1928

*Pro-government Bloc:* BBWR (Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem—Non-Party Bloc for the Support of the Government).

*Nonrevolutionary Left:* PPS; Liberation; Peasant Party; Radical Peasants Party; Independent Socialist Party of Labor.

*Communist and Pro-Soviet:* Union of Workers and Peasants; Peasant Self-Help; Ukrainian Socialist Union of Peasants and Workers; Sel-Rob Left; Bloc of Workers and Peasants; PPS-Left; Ukrainian Party of Labor; Union of Peasants and Workers; Independent Belarusan Committee of Peasants and Workers; Belarusan Union of Peasants and Workers; Cultural Union of Belarusan Workers; Belarusan Economic Union of Poland; General Belarusan Populist List; List for the Struggle of Workers and Peasants.

*Right:* Monarchist Organization; Catholic National List; Christian Democratic Party.

*Minorities:* Bloc of National Minorities; Ukrainian National Union; Ruthenian List; Jewish National Union of "Little Poland"; General Jewish National Bloc; "For the Ukrainian Cause"; Electoral Bloc of the Ukrainian Socialist Party of Peasants and Workers; Association of Jewish Workers—Bund; Poale Zion.