

Marek Jan Chodakiewicz

Accommodation, Collaboration, And Resistance in Poland, 1939-1947: A Theory of Choices and the Methodology of a Case Study¹

A human being virtually always has a choice of how to conduct himself. Depending on the circumstances and conditions, a man can choose to behave actively or passively, atrociously or decently, and, exceptionally, even heroically. Moreover, one can display in succession any or all of the aforementioned characteristics. The innate attributes and handicaps of an individual inform the choices but do not guarantee the outcomes. That means that, at a certain point, a decent human being can behave atrociously, and vice versa. This concerns in particular human behavior in the extremity of terror. However, rather than suggesting that human behavior is arbitrary and unpredictable, I would like to propose that human behavior is a result of choices.

How I arrived at these conclusions is the topic of the present discussion. I shall discuss first the methodology of my inquiry and then I shall elaborate on my discoveries.

The Scientific Laboratory

Scientific experiments are usually performed in a laboratory. As any biologist, chemist, or physicist can attest, sometimes the practical application of various scientific theories in the laboratory renders them null and void. At other times, however, scientific discoveries achieved in the controlled environment of the laboratory prove problematic at best and worthless at the extreme, if applied in the outside world.

¹ I would like to dedicate my lecture to the memory of Professor Stanisław Blejwas, a teacher and a friend.

Throughout the ages the world has served as a giant laboratory for social scientists, historians in particular. On the one hand, the generalist glides comfortably through the centuries, and even the millenia, claiming to have discovered the most important trends in the development of humanity. On the other hand, the particularist strives to capture and depict the turning points in history. But, as brief as they are relative to the vastness of time and space, even the turning points have many layers. The uncovering and analyzing of each of the layers should precede any definite conclusions about the turning points in history. However, most of the time the particularists who study such historical junctions fail to delve adequately into their complexity. Thus, a particularist becomes a generalist and it is up to the microhistorian to test and, if need be, challenge the soundness of their generalizations.

The microhistorian focuses on a fraction of the general picture and analyzes it in minute detail. A single microhistorical endeavor cannot and does not undermine the predominant generalist paradigm. However, a series of similar microhistorical undertakings can uncover the hitherto neglected and overlooked features of the component layers of a turning point in history. Thus, if a series of microhistorical experiments yield results contrary to the commonly held general assumptions, they should at least cause the re-thinking of the predominant paradigm. In other words, if the predominant generalist model is incapable of accommodating new evidence within its confines, the model should be revised or, in extremity, abandoned altogether. A new model should then be conceptualized in its place. This was after all the process which enabled us to substitute the Ptolemaic system with the Copernican one.

I do not suffer from a Copernican complex. Nonetheless, I decided to test on a micro-scale long-held assumptions about the Second World War and its aftermath in general and as they

pertained to Poland in particular. Hence, I set up my historical laboratory in the county of Janów Lubelski.²

The County of Janów Lubelski

Between 1939 and 1947 the county of Janów Lubelski,³ an agricultural area in central Poland, experienced successive occupations by Nazi Germany (1939-1944) and the Soviet Union (1944-1947). During each occupation the population, including the Polish majority (about 89 percent of the total population of 153,000 according to the 1931 census) and the Jewish minority (about 10 percent of the population), together with a sprinkling of the Ukrainians and Germans, initially accommodated the invaders. For most, accommodation was a reflexively natural attitude. In time, accommodation paved the way to either collaboration or resistance by parts of the population. Under the influence of Nazi and, then, Communist terror, collaboration and resistance existed separately but each in combination with various accommodationist stances. Eventually, a mixture of accommodation and resistance became the most prevalent attitude among the people and elite of the county of Janów because it facilitated individual and group self-preservation. In other words, the drive for survival required a degree of both participation in and opposition to the occupation regimes.

² See Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Accommodation and Resistance: A Polish County during the Second World War and its Aftermath, 1939-47* (forthcoming from Lexington Books). This is my doctoral dissertation which I defended at Columbia University in November 2000.

³ The county of Janów Lubelski (powiat Janów Lubelski) was located about 112 miles (200 km) south-east of Warsaw and 30 miles (48 km) south-west of Lublin. Geographically, the county formed a part of the Lublin Uplands (Wyżyna Lubelska). The lay of the land was tilted slightly at its northeastern tip to a maximum inclination of about 315 meters above sea level. In the south it descended gradually to form the Cissanian niche. 107,537 hectares (ha) (55.4 percent) of the area of the county was under agricultural cultivation. Forests constituted 52,680 ha (27.1 percent). The remainder was mostly meadows and fallow land. There were a score of rivers and streams originating on the territory of the county, flowing into the Wieprz river in the north; the Vistula in the west; and the San in the south. Numerous marshes dotted the countryside haphazardly.

Because of the extreme nature of the Nazi and Soviet occupations, a definition of any attitude toward the occupiers is perhaps inevitably colored by moral undertones. Although accommodation occupies the middle ground, collaboration is the most damnable and resistance the most laudable of attitudes. Nonetheless, there was some overlap between the three phenomena with accommodation serving as a bridge between the other two.

Collaboration denotes an active relationship with the occupier for reasons of self-interest and to the detriment of the occupied population. Accommodation means multi-faceted, gradated compliance with the occupiers, with its character depending on its relative proximity either to collaboration or resistance.⁴ Resistance signifies passive and active opposition to the occupiers. Its institutionalized form was the Polish Underground State (PUS) which encompassed all of the pro-independence forces, or the “independentists,” hence the exclusion of the Communists.⁵

The occupiers attempted to control totally the captive population. They enforced obedience through terror. Nazi and later Communist terror generated accommodation, collaboration, and resistance. Under its influence individuals and groups alternated between these three modes of conduct. Thus, between 1939 and 1947, terror conditioned both popular and elite choices and attitudes in the county of Janów. The Nazi practice was both harsher and less pragmatic than the Soviet one. Hence, the people and the elite treated both with hostility but adjusted to the Soviet predicament more readily. Nonetheless, the persistence of terror caused them to perceive continuity between the occupation systems.⁶

⁴ Customarily, these attitudes are described as “collaboration.” However, the word “collaboration” has been permanently stigmatized as treason. New, neutral nomenclature is needed: hence, the term “accommodation” serves our purpose better.

⁵ I have coined the word “independentists” (*niepodległościowcy*) to describe anyone throughout the political spectrum who supported Poland’s independence. Because the Communists were against it, striving to subordinate the nation to Stalin, they placed themselves outside of the independentist orientation.

⁶ I define the elite quite broadly. Aside from its conventional meaning, which encompasses landed nobility, clergy, intelligentsia, military officers, and entrepreneurs, the elite includes any person in any leadership position on any level in any organization or institution, especially of a voluntary kind.

I analyzed the formation and development of the phenomena of accommodation and resistance among the inhabitants of the county of Janów. My study compared and contrasted the popular experience and that of the local elite as well as those of each ethnic group between 1939 and 1947. It concentrated on describing the responses of the inhabitants to the policies of the occupying powers, in particular as they influenced relations between individuals, between various social classes, and between ethnic groups.

I divided my analysis into two parts. The first one dealt with the Nazi occupation (September 1939-July 1944). The second focused on the Soviet occupation (July 1944-March 1947). The discussion of the Polish independentists served as a bridge between both periods.

As far as periodization is concerned, after a brief consideration of the interwar interlude, I focused on the events from the fall of 1939 to the spring of 1947. I approached the Nazi period separately from the Soviet one. In September 1939 the invading Nazis occupied the area only to retreat in July 1944. They were replaced by the advancing Soviet Communists who, in turn, withdrew their forces from this provincial locality, shifting them to major towns and western parts of Poland by March 1947. Thus, these dates mark, respectively, the beginning and the end of direct foreign involvement in the affairs of the county of Janów. Moreover, in January 1947 the Communists falsified the results of parliamentary elections, thus eliminating legal political opposition; and in February 1947 most of the anti-Communist underground accepted a government amnesty, thus drastically undercutting the importance of armed insurgency as a factor on the Polish political scene.

Spatial limitations of my case study reflect, for the most part, the administrative borders of the county of Janów.⁷ However, the

⁷ Located in central Poland, in the province of Lublin, between 1918 and 1942 the area was officially known as the county of Janów Lubelski, after its capital. In September 1942 the Nazis changed its name to the county of Kraśnik and moved the capital to that city. In August 1944 the county of Janów was restored, when Kraśnik remained a temporary capital, but in July 1945 the Communists changed the name back to the county of Janów. I shall refer to the county of Janów throughout, except while quoting other sources which also use its other name, the county of Kraśnik. The county of Janów bordered, to the west, across the Vistula, the counties of Opatów, Sandomierz, and Ilża of the province of Kielce. From the north to the east, it neighbored the

immediately adjacent areas are considered as well whenever affected by the events within the county. Its salient peculiarity was an unusually large Communist movement, which differentiated its wartime and post-war ordeal from the rest of the nation. Overall, however, the experiences of the county of Janów were similar to the developments in much of the Province of Lublin in particular and to those in central Polish lands in general.

For spatial and conceptual reasons it must be stressed that the county of Janów was not a microcosm of Poland. Rather, it should be treated as a small part of a puzzle necessary to understand that country's fate during and after the Second World War. I have chosen to study the county of Janów to juxtapose my particular findings and general historical theories concerning the Nazi and Soviet occupations. Since most scholars generalize about central Poland, I selected a locality in the middle of the area to test the validity of earlier arguments regarding both occupations. Local peculiarities should not be mistaken however for general trends. Generalizations are warranted only if similar patterns of human behavior and interplay of events, as evident in the county of Janów, can be demonstrated to have existed in other localities.

Methodology

My doctoral dissertation, *Accommodation and Resistance: A Polish County during the Second World War and its Aftermath*,

counties of Puławy, Lublin, Krasnystaw, and Biłgoraj, all in the province of Lublin. The counties of Tarnobrzeg and Nisko of the province of Lwów were at its southern periphery. Between 1918 and 1939 as well as from 1944 to after 1947, the county of Janów administratively consisted of 15 parishes (gminy, Landgemeinden) divided into 211 village clusters (gromady, Dörfer). Its only towns were Janów Lubelski and Kraśnik, which also constituted separate town parishes (gminy miejskie, Stadtgemeinden). In the fall of 1939 the Nazis removed five adjacent parishes, including the town parish of Ulanów, from the counties of Tarnobrzeg and Nisko and incorporated them into the county of Janów, thus pushing its borders south to the San River. This arrangement was reversed after July 1944.

1939-47, is the first ever comprehensive case study of a small locality in occupied Poland. Simply, faced with a veritable and unwieldy deluge of material and scholarship of diverse value concerning the Second World War, I resolved that a case study of a small area would allow us to analyze a manageable, finite batch of primary sources and test our findings against general theories concerning the period between 1939 and 1947 on a micro-scale.

I shall now touch on the problems of historiography, methodology, and sources, as well as such pertinent topics as the Communist party and the Holocaust. First, of course, I familiarized myself with the existing scholarship concerning Poland (and Europe) during that period. Western historiography was unfettered and imaginative, although it suffered seriously because of a lack of access to crucial documents locked away behind the Iron Curtain. Historiography in Poland suffered doubly: many documents were accessible only to a few loyal Communist party historians and censorship virtually prevented the historical discourse from straying away from the straightjacket of the official propaganda. “Dissent” was only possible within the boundaries marked out by the ruling totalitarian dictatorship. True, there were various strains within the permissible discourse. But all of them had to operate according to the party line, which however gradually was losing its rigidity with the passage of time. Nonetheless, the essential framework of the original Stalinist propaganda paradigm remained intact until the fall of Communism in 1989. What resulted was liberal sounding Stalinist propaganda with a curious admixture of often rabid nationalism which the regime employed to gain legitimacy with the masses.

Hence, when I discussed Polish historiography in one of the first drafts of my dissertation, my advisor told me to jettison the lot since in essence all of it sounded the same. Accordingly, I limited myself to discussing briefly only the most representative works, while retaining almost everything in my bibliography to prevent the charges that I was unfamiliar with them.

I was also advised to avoid or limit to the minimum any polemics with the existing scholarship. After all, mine was a case study of a locality with all its peculiarities that did not always lend themselves too easily to generalizations about the whole country. Hence, I made sure I was familiar with other scholarly arguments but acknowledged them only sparsely in my footnotes.

Another reason why I did not rely too much on secondary sources is that I based myself almost exclusively on primary sources. Again, since mine was a case study I needed to research the locality in minute detail rather than rely on secondary interpretations (which at any rate were almost non-existent). Further, I discovered through comparison that some of the Communist party historians falsified documents or at least distorted their meaning. Hence it was crucial that I deal with the original sources as well as check and cross-check them against other primary data.

My methodology was simple: amass, process, and interpret the greatest possible amount of documents. As if working in a scientific laboratory, I ushered the records under a microscope and dissected them for facts and trends both familiar and hitherto overlooked. Next, I assembled the elements into a new pattern. Finally, I tested my findings against the general theories concerning the Second World War advanced by other scholars.

Fortunately, since the object of my case study was a rural county in central Poland, most documents survived. That luckily included an impressive collection of captured Nazi documents. Although I researched in every possible Polish archive, I was not completely satisfied. The Polish government still denied me permission to research in the Communist (Polish) secret police records. There was also the question of German and Soviet archives. Now, I needed documents concerning my county, a small administrative unit. I visited Germany a number of times while working on my dissertation. I learned that virtually no documents concerning my county existed in German archives. Simply, this was too insignificant an area to have generated bureaucratic

interest. There were original documents concerning the Province of Lublin and the Generalgouvernement (central Poland), but such general information I had already acquired from the captured Nazi documents stored in Warsaw.

Lack of access to the post-Soviet archives presented a much more serious problem. Although several Russian archival depositories containing a number of collections are now available to scholars, they mostly concern the transactions of the Soviet civilian administration and the Communist party. Access to military and secret police documents is still very restricted. In my case, that posed a serious problem.

The Soviets established neither their civilian administration nor the All-Russian Communist party in my county. (Instead they established a Polish Communist proxy civilian regime and a Polish Communist party cell.) Therefore the Soviet civilian bureaucracy and party documents would have been largely irrelevant. I needed access to military and secret police records. Specifically, when I inquired about the possibility of researching those documents on the lowest level (Soviet secret police county cells as well as army platoon, company, and battalion records), I was informed in no uncertain terms that hardly any *general* military and secret police records have been released concerning Poland and the Province of Lublin and, thus, I should forget about gaining access to detailed reports regarding the operations of the Soviet army and terror apparatus. Therefore, I relied almost exclusively on published Soviet primary sources (mostly Soviet secret police documents). Regrettably, only a few of those even mentioned my county. (A scholar who wrote on the anti-Communist Ukrainian insurgency encountered a similar problem; he was able to acquire a few general political and military Soviet documents – mostly on the army group and division level – but was refused access to regimental records, not to mention anything concerning the local activities of the Soviet secret police.)

To repeat, however, I was neither researching the province nor the nation at large. I concentrated on a small area. German

archives were of very little use to me because their collections concerned Poland in general and not my county. On the other hand, Soviet archives remained inaccessible, in particular on the local level. Therefore, my case study is based on practically all documents which are available to scholars at the present time and takes into account almost all published primary sources as well as secondary works concerning the Second World War in Poland.

Writing a micro-study is also fraught with another serious problem. Without the marshalling of extensive evidence, one cannot simply advance a conclusion that runs contrary to the existing scholarship. One cannot expect the reader to “have faith” in the author and take him at his word. This concerns not only major conclusions, which understandably need to be explained logically and at length, but also relatively minor conclusions, which later converge to support the final conclusion. As a result, to prove even a minor point, one is forced to muster an exhaustive array of evidence, consisting of at least a representative sample of examples.

Such methodology necessitates frequent breaks from the argument in order to substantiate the direction of its flow. It can often appear tedious and seemingly disharmonious. But there is no other way to go about it when dealing with a case study, which is essentially a laboratory experiment, than to assess methodically and to record patiently the phenomena as they unfolded between 1939 and 1947. It is absolutely crucial to observe history in minute detail lest we lose track of various subtle manifestations of continuity and discontinuity, lest we overlook the demise of the old and the birth of the new. At times, the scholar is incredulous about where the unfolding evidence leads him. However, only by laying out all the pieces of the puzzle can we reassemble the picture and appreciate its complexity.

As a result, to put it crudely, a case study requires space. The original draft of my dissertation (incomplete, since I left a number of topics unfinished) ran at 1,500 pages single-spaced. Also, as we can see, a case study requires infinite patience on the part of the

dissertation advisors. The first thing mine did was to order me to cut down significantly the gargantuan laboratory notes I presented to him. I assume that the advisors had only perused the original draft, rather than read it, as it would have taken them a semester just to familiarize themselves with it. After I trimmed it, additional revisions were ordered.

A Paradigm Shift

First, most significantly, the evidence I uncovered necessitated a paradigm shift. The old model was incapable of accommodating so much material that contradicted its logical cohesiveness. That means that my discoveries negated most of the existing scholarship. I proposed a new model that automatically challenged the reigning theories concerning the Second World War: the theory of interchangeable choices within the accommodation-collaboration-resistance triad, where, to survive, an individual could embrace any of those attitudes with the majority alternating between accommodation and resistance. The theory of choices as seen through the prism of continuity and discontinuity required also the reassessment of the old periodization, which usually treats the Nazi period separately from everything else. Hence, I stressed the need to conceptualize accommodation and resistance within the framework of the period from 1939 to 1947.

Second, new phenomena, or rather old phenomena hitherto overlooked by scholars which were discerned in the case study needed new nomenclature. Hence, for example, I developed the concept of “accommodation” rather than collaboration to describe the most prevalent attitude toward the occupation regimes and the concept of “revolutionary banditry” to explain the fusion of radical and criminal elements following the breakdown of law and order in the countryside. The neologism “independentists” was employed to

signify that those who opposed *both* Nazi and Communist totalitarianism had a positive program (freedom and independence as a necessary precondition for social reform, justice, and economic prosperity) and were not just knee-jerk anti-Communists and anti-Nazis.

Third, my dissertation advisor, now having thoroughly read the revised version of my dissertation, began to question some of my (now) seemingly unsubstantiated conclusions. Therefore he demanded that I restore some of the exhaustive evidence concerning a variety of minor points. Having read the next version of my dissertation, he concurred with my conclusions and suggested that I remove less relevant evidence, concerning land reform for example, while leaving the conclusions intact. He judged that I proved my point and, if challenged, there was enough evidence for an additional, exhaustive article on the topic to neutralize the opposition.

However, there were several sensitive topics where I was told to retain all the evidence intact in order to prove my point. This in particular concerned the predicament of the Jewish population in my county. In a novel manner, I conceptualized the Jewish cultural and economic resistance as a continuity of activities from pre-war times, rather than a completely new phenomenon. However, extra caution was necessary to present the evidence on relations between the Jews and the Christian population, the independentist underground in particular. Now, my micro-study seriously challenges the existing Western historiography by strongly suggesting that anti-Semitism, although real enough, was a secondary factor in the conflict between Jewish fugitives and Polish guerrillas. The primary reasons had to do with the struggle for scarce supplies often exacerbated by the struggle between the Communists and independentists. Also, the primary sources show conclusively that *in my county* the Communists killed more Jews than the independentists did. I do not know how accurately it reflects conditions in other regions of Poland since no comprehensive research has been done on the topic. (The

exception is a preliminary study of northeastern Poland, the Nowogródek area in particular, where according to Jewish sources, the Soviet guerillas killed more Jews than died at the hands of the Polish independentists.⁸) Granted, all this is new and requires much more work before any firm conclusions are reached on the national level.

There were no objections to my treatment of the Communists, who attempted to carry out a revolution in the guise of the struggle for national liberation. This is pretty straightforward. After all, in Yugoslavia, France, Italy, Greece, and elsewhere during the Second World War (as well as in China, Malaysia, Vietnam, and other places following 1945), the Communist guerrillas employed pretty much the same strategy and tactics. Everywhere, aside from fanatical idealists, they employed the denizens of the lower depths, often with criminal records and seriously at odds with the traditional society. Also, my dissertation advisor agreed that the Polish Communists and their virtually non-existent institutions, including the so-called Polish Committee of National Liberation (founded in Moscow), were non-entities in the countryside. Until 1947 or so their actions had hardly any impact on the developments in my county and, it turns out, also in Poland at large. It was the Soviets, in particular their secret police, who called the shots. While the existence of Polish Communists must be acknowledged, it would be wrong to continue to assign to them any significant role in the unfolding of history between 1939 and 1947.⁹

⁸ Mark Paul, "Jewish-Polish Relations in Soviet-Occupied Eastern Poland, 1939-1941," in *The Story of Two Shtetls, Brańsk and Ejszyszki: An Overview of Polish-Jewish Relations in Northeastern Poland during World War II*, part 2 (Toronto and Chicago: The Polish Educational Foundation in North America, 1998), 9-172, and the expanded edition *A Tangled A Tangled Web: Polish-Jewish Relations in Wartime Northeastern Poland* (Toronto: PEFINA Press 2002) available on the Internet (in three parts) at <http://www.kpk.org/KPK/toronto/tangledweb_1_of_3.pdf>, <http://www.kpk.org/KPK/toronto/tangledweb_2_of_3.pdf>, and <http://www.kpk.org/KPK/toronto/tangledweb_3_of_3.pdf>.

⁹ I co-edited a three volume collection of secret Communist documents which undermines virtually the entire scholarship on the topic, including statistical data. For example, according to its own dispatches, the Communist underground enrolled about 6,000 members at its peak in June 1944, while party historians insisted that there were as many as 60,000 fighters. See Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, Piotr Gontarczyk, and Leszek Żebrowski, eds., *Tajne oblicze GL-AL i PPR: Dokumenty*, 3 vols. (Warszawa: Burchard Edition,

Last but not least, if one is to show comprehensively the continuity and discontinuity between various aspects of social, cultural, economic, and political life during the Nazi and Soviet occupations, one needed more leeway in terms of space allowed for the case study. Otherwise, one should have just limited oneself to either the Nazi or the Soviet period. However, that would not have been particularly innovative and my case study would not have been an original contribution to our understanding of the past.

Accommodation, Collaboration, and Resistance

As it were, a detailed examination of a limited area in space and time allowed us to discover that during the Nazi and Soviet occupations, the population of the county of Janów both accommodated and resisted the foreign invaders. Accommodation was the natural reflex for most, while resistance for a few. However, gradually, terror goaded most into resistance based upon accommodation.

The popular and elite attitudes toward the occupiers were shaped by the Nazi and Communist occupation policies, terror in particular. Because these policies varied with each ethnic group, the responses of the Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, and Germans to the occupiers differed. Nonetheless, all ethnic and social groups displayed three types of reaction in common: resistance, accommodation, and collaboration.

The predominance of any of them depended on a plethora of individual choices made each time the elite and the ordinary people were challenged by the occupiers. Therefore, it was not unusual for the same person or group of people to have chosen at different times to resist, accommodate, or collaborate. This was true to a greater

extent of the members of the elite, who were institutionally more connected to the occupiers, than the ordinary people whose links to the occupiers were more tenuous and haphazard. Since both the Nazis and the Communists gradually introduced policies attempting to achieve total control over their subjects, however, the scope of the officially permissible behavior quickly narrowed, eventually forcing most to resist. Thus, resistance followed whenever self-interest was threatened. Paradoxically, however, most also continued to accommodate the occupiers. Yet, the paradox was only apparent. Successful resistance required successful accommodation because the latter strengthened the former. Both were mutually complementary. Accommodation often prevented or at least blunted the edge of official terror by partly assuaging the demands of the authorities, while resistance made existence under the occupations more bearable and facilitated the survival of the majority. Accommodation and resistance functioned interchangeably as a viable alternative to open rebellion which would have been suicidal without sufficient outside assistance. Their interdependence largely removed the stigma of working for either the Nazis or the Communists. Thus, accommodation and resistance fused into a self-contained phenomenon of mass defiance that differed dramatically from the rare instances of collaboration.

If we project human behavior between 1939 and 1947 onto a light spectrum, collaboration and resistance occupy the opposite ends, respectively black and white. Accommodation encompasses the graduated area wedged between them, receding from brightness into darkness.

Initially, accommodation was simply an attempt to find a *modus vivendi* with the occupying powers, while surrendering as little as possible from the pre-occupation, traditional ways of life. Over time, accommodation came to signify gradual compliance with the requests of the authorities, the compliance that theoretically was intended to neutralize but in practice only proved to be able to decrease the harm to the welfare of the majority inherent in most policies of the occupation regimes. Accommodation spanned a

plethora of attitudes that at one extreme bordered on resistance and at the other extreme stopped short of collaboration.

Although it was a prerequisite for collaboration, accommodation should not be confused with the latter. In its narrow, political sense, collaboration simply meant an act of treason committed by citizens of an occupied county in concert with either or both of the occupation regimes. According to its broad, social definition, collaboration signified a conscious and consistent collusion with the occupiers for the purpose of self-aggrandizement that caused grave harm to the population as a whole, any of its component groups, or any of its individual representatives. In the county of Janów both social and political collaboration occurred.

The antithesis of collaboration, resistance, in its broad sense, was any action undertaken that adversely affected any goal of the Nazi or Soviet occupation policies. Narrowly defined, resistance concerned armed struggle only. Its most widespread form, however, was cheating the authorities. Resistance was spontaneous or deliberate, and could be passive or active. It spanned the range from tardy and inaccurate execution of official orders (where resistance clearly overlapped with accommodation because official instructions were nonetheless fulfilled) up to and including armed struggle. Resistance was fueled by nationalism and its strength waxed consistently because foreign oppression immensely accelerated the development of national consciousness. Nonetheless, resistance was largely a response to the terrorist policies of the occupiers who shaped the developments on the local level in a way that threatened the survival of the population. Thus, a pragmatic calculus of self-defense rather than an abstract xenophobia informed the logic behind resistance.

The most highly institutionalized form of resistance was organized by the Polish independentist camp as the Polish Underground State (PUS). The independentists consisted of all political and social forces in Poland, from integral nationalists to radical populists, save for the Communists. In practice, the independentist camp encompassed mainly the Polish ethnic

majority, although it also maintained tenuous links with the Jewish minority.

The nature of accommodation, collaboration, and resistance was influenced by the Nazi and later Communist terror. Terror had many faces. Individual terror focused on specific enemies of the occupiers, while group terror targeted particular social circles hostile to them. Targeted collective terror struck at parties (such as families and neighbors) thought by the occupiers to be affiliated with their enemies.

Ideological terror affected everyone, most notably the Jews during the Holocaust (1942-44) and a significant portion of the Catholic elite (1940-47). Terror brutalized the perpetrators and witnesses, spilling over to envelop not only the primary victims, the Jews and, to a lesser extent, the elite, but also to affect the majority of the people. As a result, an implicit threat of terror, or even a memory of such events, sufficed to influence the attitude of the captive population toward the occupation authorities. Terror modified the nature of accommodation and resistance on the part of the inhabitants of the county. It was a complex process, without a set pattern, for at different times similar repressive measures by the occupiers could and did elicit, first, accommodationist and, then, oppositionist tendencies, or both simultaneously. Thus, terror triggered two conflicting responses for it tended both to pacify and to radicalize the people. Successful pacification meant cowing most of the population. Radicalization denoted a dramatic change in the individual and collective consciousness of the inhabitants. It often expressed itself in seething resentment of the occupation systems as “alien” and resulted in the growth of resistance against the occupiers.

It seems then that the dynamics of the occupation policies between 1939 and 1947 unleashed contradictory forces as far as popular and elite responses were concerned. On the one hand, the viability of accommodation and, even more so, collaboration grew proportionally to the amount of direct control the occupation regime exerted over its subjects. On the other, because it was so stifling,

official control measures expedited by terror triggered resistance among the ordinary people and elite. In practice, although the Nazi occupation was harsher than the Soviet one, the similarities between the policies of the occupying powers, and their terror in particular, caused hostility almost as acute toward the Communists as it had been toward the Nazis. Here wartime experiences shaped post-war popular and elite responses because the inhabitants of the county perceived continuity between both occupations. Simultaneously, however, precisely because the Soviet regime of occupation was milder and, over time, viewed to be more permanent, it encouraged accommodation and, indeed, collaboration on a scale larger than had been the case between 1939 and 1944.

Nonetheless, massive participation of the population and the elite in the institutions sanctioned by the occupiers is undeniable. To repeat, however, it was a necessary, perhaps indispensable, prerequisite for successful opposition to the invaders. Thus, accommodation was justified by its utility for resistance and, on occasion, was even identified with patriotism, especially as far as the Polish majority was concerned. The nature of accommodation, resistance, and, indeed, collaboration however varied within each social class and ethnic group because the challenges facing each were different in congruence with the occupation policies implemented by the Nazis and later the Communists. Applied in varying degrees to each class and ethnic group and expedited by terror, those official measures aimed to effect social and national atomization and, exceptionally, in the case of the Jews between 1942 and 1944, extermination. Instead, however, they accelerated the growth of national consciousness in each ethnic group that neutralized class conflict within each of them but prevented cooperation with other nationalities.

The Lessons of Janów

During the Nazi and Soviet occupations both accommodation and resistance were prevalent forms of conduct. However, as mentioned, accommodation was not synonymous with collaboration. Accommodation was nearly automatic and only gradually changed to resistance. To accommodate was, first of all, to recognize simply that the strength of the invaders made an immediate armed rebellion practically suicidal. Second, to accommodate translated into taking advantage of the vestiges of freedom allowed by the occupiers. Third, to accommodate meant to occupy as comfortable and convenient a position in the new system as possible. Fourth, to accommodate enabled one to resist more efficiently because one remained within the system. Successful accommodation translated into successful resistance. However, the failure of accommodation also could and did result in resistance, as was the case with the Jewish community under the Nazis.

The record of resistance in the county of Janów was mixed. In the long run, it was ultimately a failure because no resistance alone was able to overcome the Nazis and Communists. In the short run, on the one hand, resistance alleviated some of the hardships of the occupations but, on the other, it also provoked terror against both the resisters and innocent bystanders. Nonetheless, passive and unorganized resistance was also necessary for survival. Because the decentralized defiance of a multitude of individuals was hard to control, it denied the occupiers the achievement of their full goals in economic and labor exploitation. Further, self-defense from exploitation and concomitant terror caused the rise of national consciousness and facilitated the growth of organized resistance. Thus, in a way, organized resistance in general, and the PUS in particular, reflected the will of the nationally emancipated population.

The widespread popularity of the PUS and its various constituent parts was based not only on mass participation by the people in its structures, but also on other factors. First, in constitutional and personal terms, the PUS was a continuation of the pre-war Polish Commonwealth, thus making it a legitimate

institution in the eyes of the people. Second, the PUS provided an alternative source of authority and was based on voluntary participation and compliance, thus infusing it with a democratic spirit of activism and egalitarianism. Third, the leadership of the PUS recognized that, since its primary function was to protect the people, organized resistance was most effective when acting in a disciplined, moderate, and restrained manner, thus preventing reprisals by the Nazis, Communists, and their auxiliaries against the people and checking the anarchy resulting from the breakdown of law and order. Fortified by such disparate strengths, the PUS was successful under the Nazi occupation and translated its effective recipe for resistance into continued popular support for its endeavors, both covert and overt, under the Soviet rule.

Some general developments which occurred in the county of Janów apply to Poland at large, although their intensity varied from place to place. In certain regions they were absent altogether. In the Western Polish territories incorporated directly into the Reich, for example, the breakdown of law and order and mass collaboration of Polish bureaucrats in 1942 simply did not occur.¹⁰ Therefore, one ought to refrain from projecting the experience of the county of Janów onto that of the entire nation. It can merely signal the possibility of an alternative model of understanding the period between 1939 and 1947 by suggesting a path for future case studies. Only when such studies are available, chosen randomly from all parts of Poland, can we begin to reconceptualize the predominant paradigm created by the generalists, or even reject it altogether.

To stress, the county's travails were mostly its own and, to a certain extent, they reflected the conditions in some parts of the District of Lublin, but not the southeastern counties of Zamość, Hrubieszów, and Tomaszów where the SS pushed through much of its social engineering schemes resulting in death of about at least

¹⁰ There were no Polish officials left to collaborate; the Nazi police was strong enough to control criminals; and there were hardly any fugitives since the extermination of the Jews and the Soviet POWs did not take place in Poland's Western Borderlands which had been incorporated into the Reich (with the exception of the death camp at Chełmno).

10,000 and deportation of some 100,000 ethnic Poles. The tensions between Poles and Ukrainians in the county of Janów were also minor in comparison with the strife between them in the aforementioned counties of the Province of Lublin. Both paled next to the ethnic cleansing of the Polish population in the South-Eastern Borderlands at the hands of Ukrainian nationalists. Likewise, the struggle between the Polish independentists on one side and the Soviet partisans, including their Jewish allies, on the other, was much more intense in the North-Eastern Borderlands than anything that took place in the county of Janów or anywhere else in the Generalgouvernement. Further, although the Soviet occupation was milder than the Nazi rule, the Communist terror was still more bloody and oppressive than what Western Europe experienced under the tutelage of the Third Reich.

Nonetheless, finally, it is important to ask, with the benefit of the hindsight, whether it was worth fighting the Nazis and the Communists despite the terrible hardships for the elite and the ordinary people and the ultimate failure of the resistance. As suggested, passive, individual resistance was an imperative necessity at least for the preservation of one's property if not always one's physical survival. Arguably, active, organized resistance was necessary to create the institutional framework that was indispensable for the survival of the community by promoting national cohesiveness and solidarity. Such resistance, however, must pursue a tactic of minimizing the losses among the people because otherwise its very objective, the survival of the community, is defeated. Thus, resistance must of necessity be combined with accommodation.

Marek Jan Chodakiewicz
Charlottesville, Va., 3 March 2002