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Have Only Jews Suffered? Holocaust Remembrance and Polish National Resentment

Abstract: In this article the term 'resentment', as used by Friedrich Nietzsche and then redefined by Max Scheler, is employed to explain anti-Semitic attitudes in Poland. The resentful attitude is based on the emotion of jealousy, which leads to a desire to degrade anyone with whom comparisons are made, in order to increase feelings of self-worth. This characteristic of the term was used to description of the group's attitudes. In this article, modern anti-Semitism is portrayed as an inseparable element of a wider Catholic-nationalist ideology, which creates the image of (symbolic) Jews as morally inferior and unfairly competing with (symbolic) Poles. In research conducted between 1992 and 2012 the author finds correlations between strong nationalist feelings and attitudes of jealousy and a desire to degrade Jewish people. The image produced by the empirical data is one in which the Jews are the enemy, directed by their own national (sic!) interests, and desiring to take advantage of the Poles, who are honest and idealistic, driving by theirs declarations and values, even against their own, actual interests. The author hopes the article can be a starting point for discussing the idea of resentment as a theoretical tool in research devoted not only to anti-Semitism, but also to xenophobia and attitudes to other groups in the democracy.

Keywords: resentment, resentful attitude, anti-Semitic attitudes, anti-Semitic ideology, national-catholic ideology.

The concept of resentment, which was scientifically reconstructed as a socio-psychological category by Max Scheler (1961), was generally used as a tool for the analysis of people's attitudes, for the recognition of the condition of human individuals. His work is, from beginning to end, a deep polemic with both Nietzsche's ideas about Christianity, as well as the decidedly scientific analysis of the concept of resentment. Max Scheler essentially reworks the meaning of resentment, taking from Nietzsche only the basic intuition and transforms it into a semi-literary phrase used to analyze a completely different reality, which has nothing to do with what Nietzsche describes. Scheler also broadens the scope of the concept and uses it for somewhat different purposes than Nietzsche. In addition, he refers to the meaning of the French word resentment as a starting point for the psychological phenomena of envy and internal psychological motivations of people who reduce the value of others in order to gain a sense of superiority. There is no space here to analyze in detail Scheler's great writings because we are interested here in the sociological aspect of his analysis. He shows very clearly that this hostile and envious feeling arises especially in certain specific social conditions. Conditions which are especially conducive to feelings of resentment are those in which there is an established and legally guaranteed equality

among people, as in a democracy, when at the same time—competing individuals have very different social positions and levels of material wealth. I would like to discuss this sociological aspect here; in fact, it has already been widely discussed in literature concerning nations and antisemitism.

Scheler analyzed the type of social situations which can create hostile and deeply frustrating attitudes of resentment. Democracy was described by him as social environment which easily produces resentment. Confrontation with freedom and equality—the main rules of democratic society—creates the impetus for such hostile attitudes which are deeply rooted in the psychological and moral feelings of the person. Persons are confronted in the practice of social life with challenging inequalities, and some of them are contesting the rule of equality. A democratic society of equal citizens is also a society governed by competition and rivalry in nearly all sectors of human life, from economy to politics. It gives rise to a conflict between these two, different features and gives a platform for the blossoming feelings of jealousy and hate.

If my colleague and I had both started small businesses, and after a year I'm still a beginner, but the business of my colleague is blossoming and prosperous—there is a foundation for developing resentment. Am I worse than he is? Am I less intelligent than him? No, I'm working hard and he really is not any better than me! So I can't accept that he is more successful—I must hate him and assume that there are hidden reasons for his success and my failure! Maybe he is a Jew? Or maybe he is a member of some other lobby-group, for example the gays—they are like Jews in that they cooperate with each other.

I assume an analogical type of reasoning is possible for describing group relations. Another words, it is possible to use the concept of resentment for describing and analyzing group relations, and also for understanding a group's stereotypical description of other groups.

The development of democratic order in the XIX century opened the way for change in Jewish life and gave Jews the possibility to be an equal part of society, based on the fundamental equality of citizens. But Jews were still a minority, and were treated as an alien group by the nationally oriented groups of new state citizens, who described themselves as the majority and thought that Jews shouldn't, in practice, have the same rights as the national majority. Therefore, at the beginning of the era of new, national and democratic states—now called modernity—an anti-Semitic ideology was created, which stigmatized the Jewish minority in modern terms, proper to the lay order.

It is possible to say that social resentment provided the emotional background for the spread of anti-Semitic stereotypes and the development of hostile, personal attitudes toward Jews.¹ First of all, people whose position was lower or at least very unique—as Jews were living in a social *niche*, located outside of the main social life—were to be treated as equals now and entering social and political life, pretending to play an important role in the state. Secondly, Jews were not only becoming active

¹ I analyzed the anti-Semitic attitudes as a factor of resentment, see Krzeminski (2011). The volume presents articles, analyzing resentful attitudes of different national groups to Jews, not only in the East, but also in the West and South Europe.

in the market economy, but were a very successful actor, which has long been described in literature as a reason for anti-Semitism. Thirdly, the new democratic state was a national one, which had a special meaning in Central—Eastern Europe. The anti-Semitic ideology, whose creation and spread in Western Europe was so brilliantly described by Hannah Arendt, was deeply connected with the other ideology of this time—the nationalistic ideology, especially powerful and widespread in Central and Eastern Europe, where some nations, especially the Poles, were fighting for an independent, national state. But in the East and West, the national majority pretended to be a real democratic folk who should have a decisive voice in the state.² Therefore, we have the Polish—and not only Polish—idea of national democracy. This term was also the name of a party which was organized by a man who was the main author of Polish nationalistic and anti-Semitic ideology. Ideas of National Democracy, which created the modern kind of patriotism, was an ideology which glorified one’s own nation and was deeply associated/linked with religion and the Church. The Polish church at the beginning of the XX century was engaged in the national independence movement. Of course, the nationalistic project of New Poland wasn’t only anti-Semitic, but also decidedly xenophobic. National minorities, especially Ukrainians, were to be subordinated to Poles or they were supposed to assimilate in order to be considered full citizens of the Polish state.

In some sense this specific historic situation was repeated after the fall of communism. Democracy allowed for the reconstruction of the old ideologies, especially national democracy. The anti-liberal content of this ideology was used as a very strong tool, critical of the new order which was based on the main rule of rights for minorities and generally Human and Citizens Rights. Our research can illustrate the fact that some citizens, who ignored the experience of Polish Solidarity [Solidarność] and the accent placed on Human Rights by Pope John Paul II, did not favor the same rights for people from national minorities.

In the first part of the research, which was done in 1992, at the very beginning of the democracy building process, most Poles approved some limitations—especially in party organizing and election to Parliament—for Jews and others minorities.

Table 1
Establishing a party, 1992 (% , N = 1013)

Should they have the right to establish political parties?	Yes	No	Difficult to say	Total
Jews	30	53	17	100
Germans	28	57	15	100
Russians	27	57	16	100
Gypsies	26	58	16	100

² Last decade brought the new interpretations of the development of anti-Semitism in a Central-East Europe, using the concept of “modernity”; see for example Steven Beller (2007). The critical review of this analysis by Ireneusz Krzemiński in Polish edition of Steven Beller, 2014.

Table 2

Support for voting restrictions, 1992 (% , N = 1013)

Would you support voting restrictions for:	Yes	No	Difficult to say	Total
Jewish minorities?	74	12	14	100
German minorities?	83	8	9	100
Russian minorities?	81	8	11	100
Gypsy minorities?	85	6	9	100
Other minorities?	70	10	20	100

I correlated the questions concerning the rights of minorities with anti-Semitism and with the answers to three questions, which could be treated as indicators of national pride, so to speak. They were the following questions: Should Poles feel more proud of their history because they behaved more nobly than others nations? Has the Polish nation been wronged more often than others nations? And, Do Poles have more valuable traits than other nations?

As we can imagine, the anti-Semites and persons who thought that Poles should feel proud of their own history also thought that Poles were harmed more often in the past and, of course, that they have more valuable traits than others nations—and they also usually agreed more often with the imposition of limitations of citizen rights on minorities.

There wasn't a great difference between the attitudes to Jews and other national groups, like Germans or Russians. However, they were unique nations and unique minorities from the historical experience point of view. Throughout history, Poles really did undergo a lot of suffering from Germans and Russians, but Jews were treated analogically. Jews were never an aggressor to Poland, quite the opposite in fact. As Polish citizens, they suffered equally to Poles and were also suffering a lot at the hands of "ethnic" Poles. But in the Polish interpretation of history, the opposite was rather true: only 9% of our respondents said that throughout history "Poles experience more good than bad from Jews." The percentage of answers is the same from 1992 to 2012 (in this last research it was 8%). Now, 52% of respondents stated that "Poles experienced the same good as bad" from Jews, but the number of persons believing that "Poles experienced more bad" from Jews throughout history rose since 1992. In 1992 such answers were 17,5%, in 2002—27%, in 2012—24%.

Table 3

What Poles experienced from Jews throughout history? (%)

What Poles experienced from Jews throughout history?	1992	2002	2012
More good than bad	9	9	8
The same good as bad	46	51	52
More bad	17	27	24
Difficult to say	28	13	16
Total	100	100	100

Table 4

What Jews experienced from Poles throughout history? (%)

What Jews experienced from Poles throughout history?	1992	2002	2012
More good	36	40	42
The same good as bad	38	43	39
More bad	8	8	10
Difficult to say	18	9	9
Total	100	100	100

Table 5

What Poles experienced from Germans throughout history? (%)

What Poles experienced from Germans throughout history?	1992	2002	2012
More good	2	2.5	3
The same good as bad	6	11.5	17
More bad	88	82	77
Difficult to say	4	4	3
Total	100	100	100

Table 6

What Poles experienced from Russians throughout history? (%)

What Poles experienced from Russians throughout history?	1992	2002	2012
More good	2	3	3
The same good as bad	17	24	26
More bad	70	66	65
Difficult to say	11	7	6
Total	100	100	100

Table 7

What Poles experienced from Ukrainians throughout history? (%)

What Poles experienced from Ukrainians throughout history?	1992	2002	2012
More good	2	3	5
The same good as bad	13	29	41
More bad	66	50	41
Difficult to say	19	18	13
Total	100	100	100

The opinions are correlated with the growing number of anti-Semites in 2002 and their declining number in 2012, but still a little more than in 1992.

It is not accidental, quite the opposite. The present anti-Semitism could be treated as an indicator of a wider view of the world, or ideological orientation, specifically the national—catholic world-view. In this ideological picture of Poles and Poland in

the world, the image of Jews plays an important role. It is interesting that in the interpretation of Polish history by Roman Dmowski (1907), the father of the idea of national democracy, Jews were not described as loyal citizens of Poland throughout the ages. Jews were described as a hostile minority, who in practice unjustly and immorally exploited the Poles, both in the past and in contemporary times. There is, of course, a danger for the future. In this interpretation it is possible to find resentment and of course this ideology produces these kinds of attitudes.

This resentful point of view is connected with the interpretation of the war and the Polish view of the Holocaust and its consequences. We started our research 20 years ago with one of the hypotheses about the so-called moral—cultural rivalry between Poles and Jews: who conducted themselves better throughout history? (Krzeminski 1993, 2001, 2002). Besides the religious and rather hidden sense of this rivalry, meaning: which nation is really chosen by God, the important aspect is moral superiority and perfection in the historical conduct of both nations. Poles are superior because throughout history they behaved not like Jews (also not like Germans, by the way), who were realizing the interests of their nations, but acted according to their declared obligation, even against their own, national interests. Therefore the image of suffering Poles is very deeply rooted in the Polish imagination.³

The consequence of this point of view is a special rivalry of sufferings—especially during the war: who suffered more—Jews or Poles? In the Polish press in the middle of the 90's, there was even a great discussion on the Jewish Holocaust with an ambiguous result.⁴ The important conclusion of this discussion was the opinion that it is difficult to compare Jewish and Polish suffering. Therefore, many Poles do not accept the Holocaust as a very unique occurrence in history and contest the opinion that Jewish suffering is not comparable with the Polish one. Most of the people who held this opinion belonged to the ideological orientation which we call the national—catholic one.

We asked about the war sufferings openly.

Table 8

Which nation suffered more during the war (%)

The nation that suffered the most was...:	1992	2002	2012
The Jews	46	38	32
The Poles	6	8	16
Both equally	33	48	46
Hard to compare	13	4	5
Difficult to say	2	2	1
Total	100	100	100

³ On suffering Poles see also in: Marek Nowak, *OP* (1995), Romantic and not—calculating image of Poles was stressed in the French stereotype of Poles: Joanna Nowicki (1995) The reconstruction of Polish identity through the ages and also dynamic image of Poles in European nations one can find in: Delsol, Maslowski, Nowicki (2002). The articles on romantic self-portrait of Poles, see Walicki, op.cit, also Szczuka, op. cit.

⁴ I've in mind the press-discussion, started in the daily *Życie* in 1998.

As we can see, the popularity of the opinion that the Jews suffered more during the Second World War has been declining during the past twenty years. It is really interesting if one takes into account the fact that during the last few years there were not only great discussions about the fate of Jews and Poles during the war, but important books concerning the unique situation of the Jews under German occupation were also published. The last result is also curious because other researchers (such as Marek Kucia 2000; 2001; 2005; 2011) are reporting a growing knowledge about the Holocaust, Auschwitz, and other German camps. I think this result is the illustration of the resentful feelings towards Jews connected with the war. Rivalry in this case means “bad feelings” toward Jews because the Holocaust and Jewish suffering monopolized the memory about the nation’s suffering during the Second World War. Jews see themselves as the main victim of the war but we Poles suffered no less, even if in a different way. In the last research we had used some questions prepared by other researchers. The questions were the indicators so called “secondary anti-Semitism.”⁵ There were four questions: Are Jews taking advantage of Poles’ guilty feelings? I’m angry to hear all of the time about Polish crimes against Jews; Jews want reparations from Poles for something that was in reality done by Germans; Jews are responsible for the spread of misinformation about Poles as anti-Semites.

The result of our research was surprising. Most of the answers to these questions (the first one was the only exception) agreed with the anti-Jewish thesis contained in the questions. I’d correlated answers to these four questions with our “nationalistic indicator” questions. The results were as follows.

Table 9

The opinion that Polish nation has been wronged more often throughout history than other nations as determinant of perception of Jewish-Polish relations, 2012 (%)

Has the Polish nation been wronged more often than others?	Jews take advantage of the guilty feelings of Poles		It annoys me to talk about Polish crimes against Jews		Jews want reparations from Poles instead of from Germans		Jews spread the image of Poles as anti-Semites	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
More often	44	42	73	22	61	21	46	30
Neither more nor less	33	59	53	41	48	38	32	47
Less often	31	62	48	50	36	45	33	52
Difficult to say	23	49	43	26	34	29	26	40
Total N = 1201	40 N = 479	47 N = 565	65 N = 784	29 N = 344	55 N = 663	27 N = 318	41 N = 492	36 N = 432

Note: The percentages do not sum-up horizontally to 100 because “difficult to say” answers are not included for the sake of simplicity.

⁵ Imhoff 2010. The idea was used in the empirical research by Polish scholars, who adopted the German scale to Polish situation. See: Bilewicz, Winiewski, Kofta, Wójcik 2013; Wójcik, Lewicka, Bilewicz 2011. Adrian Wójcik is analyzing the data of our investigation in the report of the last research (I. Krzeminski, forthcoming).

Table 10

**The opinion that the Poles behaved more nobly throughout history than other nations
as determinant of perception of Jewish-Polish relations, 2012 (%)**

The Poles' behaviour in the past:	Jews take advantage of the guilty feelings of Poles		It annoys me to talk about Polish crimes against Jews		Jews want reparations from Poles instead of from Germans		Jews spread the image of Poles as anti-Semites	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
They have behaved more nobly	44	42	74	21	64	19	49	30
They have behaved neither more nor less nobly	37	53	57	36	48	34	33	44
They have behaved less nobly	44	49	52	49	52	47	50	43
Difficult to say	17	47	51	28	29	29	19	36
Total N = 1201	49 N = 479	47 N = 565	65 N = 784	29 N = 344	55 N = 663	27 N = 318	41 N = 492	36 N = 432

Note: The percentages do not sum-up horizontally to 100 because "difficult to say" answers are not included for the sake of simplicity.

Table 11

**The opinion that the Poles have a greater number of valuable traits than other nations
as determinant of perception of Jewish-Polish relations, 2012 (%)**

The Poles' valuable traits	Jews take advantage of the guilty feelings of Poles %		It annoys me to talk about Polish crimes against Jews %		Jews want reparations from Poles instead of from Germans %		Jews spread the image of Poles as anti-Semites %	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
They have a greater number	54	32	81	14	72	15	58	22
They are no different from others	34	56	60	35	51	31	35	43
They have fewer	51	43	66	32	54	29	52	32
Difficult to say	33	34	56	24	44	28	27	32
Total N = 1201	40 N = 479	47 N = 565	65 N = 784	29 N = 344	55 N = 663	27 N = 318	41 N = 492	36 N = 432

Note: The percentages do not sum-up horizontally to 100 because "difficult to say" answers are not included for the sake of simplicity.

As we can see, in all the cases respondents who believe Poles have more valuable traits, behave more nobly in history, and had been wronged in history regularly accepted the theses included in the questions, namely: Jews take advantage of Poles' guilty feelings, they want reparations for something that the Germans did, they spread the image of Poles as anti-Semites. Also, these persons are more often angry when hearing about Polish murders of Jews during the war. The same results are in cor-

relation with our anti-Semitism indicators. It is very important that these following opinions gained an especially high percentage of acceptance: “I’m tired of listening about Polish murders of Jews” and “Jews want to have compensation from Poles for what Germans did.”

Both of these results I would like to treat as good indicators of resentful feelings. Especially when you take into account that people who weren’t anti-Semites rather more often responding than Jews want compensation from Poles instead of Germans than the opponents of this , and they feel anger when listening about Polish murders of Jews.

Table 12

Modern anti-Semitism and two questions—indicators of resentful feelings, 2012 (%)

The modern anti-Semitism	Angry when hearing about Polish murders of Jews		Jews want compensation from Poland for what Germans have done	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Not anti-Semites	53	40	39	38
Anti-Semites	90	7	80	9

Note: The percentages do not sum-up horizontally to 100 because “difficult to say” answers are not included for the sake of simplicity.

As was expected, anti-Semitic declarations favor positive answers to all of the cited questions. In the table is an illustration of this fact. We put two important questions there which can be recognized as indicators of resentful feelings.

During the last few years, the problem of murdering Jews by Poles during the war and just after it was an important subject in the Polish media, and some important, historical books indisputably describing such horrible situations were published. This—of course—challenges the idea of the war period as a period of brave and honorable struggle of Polish society/nation with the German occupants. Such wrongful behavior against Jews fundamentally questions this morally graceful vision. Reactions to it are the angry feelings towards the victims, meaning Jews. And this is something that we can observe here.

But in our questionnaire we had others questions which could also be interpreted this way. Especially, the question about the evaluation of the stereotype that Poles are anti-Semites that the world public opinion has.

Table 13

Is the opinion about Poles as anti-Semites true or not?

Opinion about Poles as anti-Semites	1992	2002	2012
True	21	31	25
It depends	32	35	38
Not true	34	30	31
Difficult to say	13	4	6
Total	100	100	100

We can see that during the past 20 years the answer that “it depends” increases, which could be understood to mean that the stereotype is true for some Poles, and false for others. Still, 1/4 of our respondents answered yes, it is a true statement! But on the other hand, when we asked about the reasons for such an opinion, the answers were rather resentful from my point of view.

Table 14
Why the Poles are considered to be anti-Semites?

Perceived causes	% respondents ^a		% answers	
	2002	2012	2002	2012
Anti-Polish propaganda which has nothing to do with the truth	29	28	19	21
The Poles know the Jews better than other nations and that's why they don't like them	24	19	16	14
The Poles do not dislike the Jews more than other nations, they just admit to things which others won't	31	23	20	18
The Jews accuse the Poles, who are faithful Catholics, of anti-Semitism in order to negatively influence the image of the Catholic religion and the church	17	12	11	9
People believe that the Poles are anti-Semites because the Holocaust took place in Poland, but they forget that the Germans organized it	44	44	28	33
Other opinions	10	6	6	5
N = 100%	1082	1201	1678	1586

^a Percentages exceed 100% in columns because of multi-choice answers.

In the last 10 years, there are no visible changes in the answers concerning the reasons for the accusations that Poles are anti-Semites. A little less popular is the answer that Poles as a people are not more anti-Semitic than other nations and the reason for the stereotype that they are anti-Semitic is that they tend to express their opinions more openly than others. Also, the opinion that anti-Polish stereotypes are connected to the fact that Nazi Germans organized the Holocaust on Polish soil is a little more popular. But there are no special dynamics of this and so I correlated the answers to this question with the new variable, which was constructed from the answers which glorified one's own nation and answers describing one's own nation as no different from others. These are the results—[table 15](#).

This table brought some interesting results concerning the idea of feelings of resentment toward Jews. It is clear that all the patriots who glorify the Polish nation are much more inclined to choose as the reason for stereotyping Poles as anti-Semites the fact that Poles know Jews better and therefore don't like them. But more problematic are the answers describing Poles as no more anti-Semitic than others, just openly expressing their opinions about the Jews, which other nations tend to conceal. Still, it is possible to treat these answers as a resentful reaction, but in this case there is no correlation between the national pride and treating one's own nation as no different from others.

Table 15

Perceived causes of accusing Poles of anti-Semitism by opinions about the Polish nation, 2012
(% respondents)

Perceived causes	The Poles' noble behaviour throughout history		Polish nation wronged in history		The Poles have more noble traits than the others	
	Tendency to glorify the nation	Poles no different from others	Tendency to glorify the nation	Poles no different from others	Tendency to glorify the nation	Poles no different from others
Anti-Polish propaganda which has nothing to do with the truth	32	26	29	26	30	29
The Poles know the Jews better than other nations and that's why they don't like them	22	13	22	13	24	14
The Poles do not dislike the Jews more than other nations, they just admit to things which others won't	23	23	25	22	25	22
The Jews accuse the Poles, who are faithful Catholics, of anti-Semitism in order to negatively influence the image of the Catholic religion and the church	14	8	13	9	14	10
People believe that the Poles are anti-Semites because the Holocaust took place in Poland, but they forget that the Germans organized it	44	46	43	45	43	47
Other opinions	4	8	5	7	2	7
N = 100%	615	446	789	335	291	707

Percentages exceed 100% in columns because of multi-choice answers.

Finally, I would like to present some answers to the questions about the reactions and evaluations of the situation during the war. Questions concerning the impossibility to give more help to Jews and eventually the bad conscience felt towards Jews. The last question is about the meaning of Auschwitz: who was the main victim of the camp?

During the last few years, as I said before, we have gained new knowledge in Poland about the nation's behavior during the war, and about its heroism as well as its crimes, mainly against the Jews. But as we can see, the answers have not changed very much. It is important that data from 2002 are much more glorifying towards Poles and

Table 16

Opinions about the Poles helping the Jews (%)

How the Poles helped the Jews?	1992	2002	2012
As best they could	78	86	79
They could have done more	13	9	13
I have a different opinion on this subject	9	3	1
Difficult to say	0	2	7
Total	100	100	100

Table 17

Have the Poles saved as many Jews as they could? (%)

Could the Poles have save more Jews?	1992	2002	2012
Yes, they could	27	26	27
No, they could not	50	54	46
Difficult to say	23	20	27
Total	100	100	100

Table 18

Have the Poles reasons for guilty feeling towards Jews? (%)

Have the Poles reasons to feel guilty about the Jews?	1992	2002	2012
Yes, they do	11	12	13
No, they do not	67	83	68
Difficult to say	22	5	19
Total	100	100	100

are more hostile toward Jews than in 1992 and now, in 2012. It is also interesting that more people answered “hard to tell” to both of these questions about helping Jews during the war. But still most Poles are sure that they haven’t any reason to have a bad conscience or to feel guilty about the Jews. I think that this could also be interpreted as an illustration of our thesis about resentment.

At last—a very problematic question about Auschwitz (table 19).

Table 19

The camp in Auschwitz was the place of extermination of... (%)

Auschwitz was the place of extermination of:	2002	2012
Mostly Poles	8	9
Mostly Jews	14	23
People of many nations	78	65
Hard to tell	0	3
Sum	100	100

The answers to this question are interesting from our point of view because there is a visible growth of the historically proper answer: The main victims of Auschwitz were the Jews. It is going into direction, visible in the research by Marek Kucia. I have correlated this variable with four questions, including the “secondary anti-Semitism,” but there wasn’t any dependency between the variables. But it was an interesting result for the testing out of the hypothesis about resentment. The answers to the question: “are Jews themselves responsible for the sufferings they have endured?” have an impact on the image of Auschwitz.

Table 20

Opinions about Jews being responsible for the sufferings they have endured and the opinions on who was mainly exterminated in Auschwitz, 2012 (%)

Are the Jews to be blamed for their own suffering?	Auschwitz was the place of extermination of...				
	Mainly Poles	Mainly Jews	Many nations	Difficult to say	Total
Yes	15	16	66	3	100
No	6	29	64	1	100

Table 21

Jews are themselves responsible for the sufferings they have endured and the image of Auschwitz, 2012, in %

Jews are to blame for their own suffering	Auschwitz was the place of extermination of...			
	Mainly Poles	Mainly Jews	Many nations	Hard to tell
Yes, agree	15.4	16.0	66.2	2.5
No, do not agree	5.6	28.5	63.8	2.0

These results can be interpreted as a real illustration of our thesis. Those who not hold the opinion about Jews being responsible for the sufferings they have endured, are much more likely to see them as the main victims of Auschwitz. It is possible to say that this attitude is free from resentful feelings. On the other hand, it is interesting that the most popular answer is always that the victims were people from many nations. This was absolutely the main interpretation of Auschwitz during the communist period. Although various research—mainly done by cited Marek Kucia—shows that there is growing knowledge about Jews as the main victims of Auschwitz, our research illustrates that there still exists the symbolic meaning of the German camp which expresses the stereotypes from the past.

Conclusion

I hope this might be material for discussion on the rivalry thesis and, above all, about the possibility of using the category of resentment to understand anti-Semitic and

nationalistic attitudes. The empirical material, sheds light on the problem, although it needs the theoretical and methodological discussion.⁶

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⁶ In the book *Politics and Resentment. Antisemitism and Counter-Cosmopolitanism in the European Union*, edited by Lars Rensmann and Juliusz H. Schoeps the term “resentment” is used in a colloquial sense rather. I hope the deepening of the concept could be fruitful for the next studies.

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