RESISTANCE AND REBELLION

LESSONS FROM EASTERN EUROPE

Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe explains how ordinary people become involved in resistance and rebellion against powerful regimes. The book shows how a sequence of causal forces – social norms, focal points, rational calculation – operates to drive individuals into roles of passive resistance and, at a second stage, into participation in community-based rebellion organization. By linking the operation of these mechanisms to observable social structures, the work generates predictions about which types of community and society are most likely to form and sustain resistance and rebellion.

The empirical material centers around Lithuanian anti-Soviet resistance in both the 1940s and the 1987–1991 period. Using the Lithuanian experience as a base line, comparisons with several other Eastern European countries demonstrate the breadth and depth of the theory.

The book contributes to both the general literature on political violence and protest and the theoretical literature on collective action.

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For Daniela

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Preface

This book endeavors to explain how ordinary men and women, in the face of enormous risks, resist and sometimes violently rebel against powerful regimes. Theoretically, the work seeks to identify sequences of mechanisms that combine to produce these phenomena. Empirically, the book devotes the bulk of its pages to four episodes of Lithuanian anti-Soviet resistance (1940–1941, 1944–1950, 1987–1988, and January 1991). The Lithuanian case serves as a base line for comparisons with several other cases of anti-Soviet, anti-Communist, and anti-Nazi resistance.

In an important sense, this book began in the mid-1980s, before I started graduate school. At that time, I was selling housewares to Yugoslavian immigrants in Chicago. In the course of this work, conversation would often turn to the violent events that occurred in Yugoslavia during the Second World War. These conversations led to two insights crucial to this book. First, the memories of survivors of this period were extremely vivid and could be usefully tapped to recreate the social life of the wartime years. Second, it seemed clear that participants in the anti-German resistance and the underlying Chetnik-Partisan conflict did not usually become involved because of ideological or political reasons; rather, they were pulled in through their social networks. There was a connection between participation in resistance and local social norms – a theme pursued throughout this book.

As a graduate student in the Political Science Department at the University of Chicago, I wished to capitalize on my previous experience to write about 1940s Yugoslavia, especially Bosnia. I began seriously planning my research in 1990. Needless to say, events overtook me. For a variety of reasons, research on 1940s Yugoslavia became less feasible. Still wanting to research the local roots of sustained rebellion, I turned to the best available alternative: Lithuania. The Lithuanian center of North American immigration, Chicago's Marquette Park neighborhood, lay only a few miles from the Uni-

versity of Chicago. I moved there during the last years of graduate school to become familiar with the Lithuanian émigré community. I began interviewing émigrés in 1990 and continued throughout 1991. I made two trips to Lithuania to conduct similar interviews. The first trip was not entirely successful. On my second day of Lithuanian fieldwork, January 13, 1991, I was a participant-observer in the Soviet attack that resulted in more than a dozen deaths. These events are the focus of Chapter 9. My second effort, in the summer of 1992, was more successful. The Lithuanian case proved extremely rich. The three successive occupations of the 1940s provided variation along many key dimensions. The events of the perestroika period, as well as January 1991, also provided useful insights into acts of resistance. Although I do not speak Lithuanian, this did not prove a problem with the long-term immigrants in Chicago. In Lithuania, I was able to find someone who was both a professional translator and social scientist to act as guide. The reader will see the results of these interviews and experiences throughout the text.

There is an obvious time lag between the date of these interviews and the publication of this book. The reason for this lag is that the interviews, experiences, and secondary research collected in the beginning years of this book project spawned a second book project. While the present book addresses the puzzle of how the less powerful manage to sustain rebellion against the more powerful, this second project confronts the question of why and when the more powerful commit violence and discrimination against the less powerful. As each project informs the other, I began working on them simultaneously. At the time of this writing, the second manuscript, *Fear, Hatred, Resentment: Delineating Paths to Ethnic Conflict in Eastern Europe,* is nearing completion.

My research (especially this book) is the product of the University of Chicago. I consider myself fortunate to have been a graduate in the Political Science Department. I was even more fortunate to have been able to work with the four individuals who made up my dissertation committee. John Padgett, in his own work as well as his teaching, showed me how to integrate theory with fieldwork. I never left his office without a new way of looking at my work. David Laitin has taught me most of what I know about comparative method. His uncanny ability to cut to the heart of the matter is invaluable. John Mearsheimer, whom I have known since my undergraduate days, has been not only a source of professional insight, but also a constant source of personal support. He has encouraged me to pursue important issues

and never shy away from controversial topics. Jon Elster's ideas and scholarship helped form the theoretical foundation of this book. My intellectual debt will be obvious to anyone familiar with his work. Beyond that, his patience, advice, and sometimes blunt criticisms were critical in finally completing this manuscript.

I would like to make several other acknowledgments. The MacArthur Foundation provided funding for the crucial years of this project. I would like to thank the Sidlauskas family for their hospitality, kindness, and strawberry preserves. Arvydas Reneckis was essential during my winter 1991 fieldwork in Vilnius as well as earlier in Chicago. I owe a great debt to Virgiene Valantanavicius, my guide and translator during the summer 1992 fieldwork. These interviews took us into most regions of Lithuania, down narrow dirt roads and through dark forests. Valantanavicius's language skills were only part of his contribution. His social skills and acumen provided entry into Lithuanian communities that I could never have accessed on my own. I owe the greatest debt to the interviewees who made this work possible. Their memories were often painful. I hope this book does them justice.

Julie Stone, John Ginkel, and Gayle Corrigan helped transcribe many of the interview tapes. Tom Kolasa provided computer help.

Finally, and most importantly, I wish to recognize my wife, Daniela Stojanovic, for her unwavering support.