

From the Editor:

*Slavic Review* publishes letters to the editor with educational or research merit. Where the letter concerns a publication in *Slavic Review*, the author of the publication will be offered an opportunity to respond. Space limitations dictate that comment regarding a book review should be limited to one paragraph; comment on an article should not exceed 750 to 1,000 words. The editor encourages writers to refrain from ad hominem discourse.

D.P.K.

To the Editor:

Although I feel some responsibility to do so, I am unable to respond to every piece of anti-Polish slander I encounter in the popular press. I must object, however, when a one-sided attack on Poland and ethnic Poles appears in a publication such as *Slavic Review*. Randolph L. Braham in his review of *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath*, ed. István Deak, Jan T. Gross, and Tony Judt (*Slavic Review* 60, no. 3) claims: “[Jan T. Gross] convincingly demonstrates that one of the primary reasons why the Nazis were able to liquidate almost the entire Jewish community easily and with impunity was the endemic nature of anti-Semitism in Poland. Relying on archival documentation, Gross argues persuasively that the Poles, with relatively few exceptions, not only failed to assist or sympathize with the Jews, but were also hostile to them both during and after the war as reflected by the many pogroms.”

Jan T. Gross is a New York sociologist who has made a name for himself through his one-sided treatment of Polish-Jewish relations, notably *Neighbors* (2001). A major flaw in his writing is his reluctance to examine Jewish support for the Soviet invasion of Poland and the impact this support had on Polish-Jewish relations. Such a complex subject as Polish-Jewish relations deserves greater sensitivity than what Gross and Braham have offered up.

KEVIN HANNAN  
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Professor Braham replies:

Apparently Mr. Hannan is in the rank of those who cannot or will not come to grips with the realities of the Nazi era in general and the Holocaust in particular. Instead of labeling my review as “slander,” perhaps he ought to have read Jan Gross’s study more carefully—that is, if he read it at all—to determine whether the book review can really be considered “a one-sided attack on Poland and ethnic Poles.” That Gross’s seminal study accurately reflects the realities of Polish-Jewish relations during the Nazi era is also revealed by the contrition of some of the top leaders of the Polish state and Catholic Church. For example, in a speech before the Parliament of Israel (Knesset) in 1991, President Lech Wałęsa “asked for forgiveness.” On 10 July 2001, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Jedwabne massacre, President Aleksander Kwasniewski apologized in his own name and “in the name of those Polish people whose consciences are shocked by the crime.” On 25 August 2000, at a special Jubilee Year session in Czestochowa, the Polish nation’s holiest shrine, the leaders of Poland’s Roman Catholic Church issued a letter of joint apologies for failings in its 2000-year history, asking for forgiveness for its toleration of anti-Semitism and disdain of non-Catholics. Will Mr. Hannan include these leaders in the Gross-Braham camp as well?

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