

Abstract

*The debate about Jan Tomasz Gross's *Neighbors* (2000) in which the author gave a detailed description of the collective murder of the Jewish community of Jedwabne by its ethnic Polish neighbors on July 10, 1941, has been the most important and longest-lasting in post-communist Poland. The publication of *Neighbors* raised important issues such as the rewriting of the history of Polish-Jewish relations during the Second World War, of modern national history, and the reevaluation of the collective self-image of Poles themselves as having been solely victims. The article places the discussion within the context of two approaches to the collective past—first, the self-critical approach that challenges the old, biased representation of Polish-Jewish relations and the Polish self-image as victims; and second, the defensive approach that seeks to maintain the older representations of Polish-Jewish relations and the Polish self-image. A general description of the debate is presented, followed by an analysis of its various stages and dynamics. The conduct of the investigation by the Institute of National Memory (IPN) into the Jedwabne massacre and the official commemoration on the sixtieth anniversary of the crime are two crucial events that demonstrate that important segments of the Polish political and cultural elite are capable of overcoming its dark past. At the same time, reactions of the right-wing nationalist political and cultural elites and their supporters reveal that the defensive approach continues to exert influence in public life. Only time will tell if this latter phenomenon will become marginal.*

Introduction

It has been observed that memory of the past tells us perhaps more about present society than about the past: it tells us more about the current condition and self-image of society and its level of self-reflection over its collective history. The memory of the past, to draw on the classic definition of Maurice Halbwach, is an interpretive, meaning-making process framed by specific social groups—families, ethnic groups, and nations.¹ In the case of nations, the memory of the past provides a self-portrait, which as a rule is dominated with images of glorious moments

of the national past and of the martyrdom of the national community. What is frequently excluded from the collective self-portrait is the “dark past” of the nation which encompasses painful internal divisions of the national community or its problematic relations with and unfair treatment of ethnic and national minorities. Such a dark past enters the realm of collective memory through acrimonious public debates in which members of the cultural elite play a leading role in presenting it as an integral part of the national self-portrait.

Thus, public debate about the dark past provides an insight into the ways nations recollect and rework the memory of painful national events and how memory of such events is integrated or not into their collective identities. Public debate on relations with minorities entails consideration of moral norms about how one should or should not act toward them, and is more acceptable in some communities than in others. Scholars of memory contend that the development of such debate depends on the presence and stability of political culture, thus permitting public reckoning, and on the level of acceptance for the practice of self-criticism within a particular collective culture.² Public debate is also regarded as a test of the development of a pluralistic society and as an example of collective self-reflection in democratic culture.³

Undoubtedly, the debate in Poland about *Neighbors* is about the darkest aspect of Polish-Jewish relations during the Second World War (and Polish-Jewish relations in general).⁴ In light of available wartime documentation, both Polish and Jewish, the Podlasie region in northeastern Poland where Jedwabne is located, was the only area in which collective massacres of Jews by civilian Poles took place in the summer of 1941—at the time when the region, previously occupied by the Soviet Union, had been reoccupied by Nazi Germany.⁵

Despite the horrific nature of the crime, the Jedwabne massacre cannot be interpreted as a historical fact in support of the notion of Poland as an alleged accomplice of the Nazi plan and execution of the genocide of European Jews.⁶ Gross has been falsely accused of promoting this. Rather the massacre should be treated as an act of interethnic violence occurring at a specific time and under particular socio-political conditions. The ethnic Polish population, victimized under both Soviet and German occupation, was itself capable of victimizing its fellow Jewish citizens, including children, women, and the elderly. Thus, in the context of the Second World War the case of the Jedwabne massacre provides a positive answer to an important general question: can a victim be at the same time a cruel victimizer?

Another interrelated general problem that emerges is the relationship between anti-minority beliefs reinforced under specific socio-political conditions and a limited genocide—seemingly permitted while under occupation by a party that actively advocated the physical destruction of the minority group.⁷ An in-depth scholarly comparative analysis is needed to address this question.

Although the Polish dark past encompasses other aspects of the national history unconnected to the Jewish minority, the dark past in relation to Jews has proven to be the most acutely troublesome aspect of Polish collective memory.⁸ Perhaps one of the reasons is the close connection between this problem and the discourse about what kind of a national community Poles wish to belong to and the collective self-portrait of Poles solely as victims and heroes. The *Neighbors* debate can be viewed as a manifestation of the importance of these connections; if not for these links, the debate would not have generated the high public interest it did.

Gross's *Neighbors* is representative of the self-critical approach. The first self-critical attempts were made by a group of Polish intellectuals in the immediate postwar period, but were suppressed in 1948 by the newly-imposed communist regime.⁹ Between 1949 and the 1980s all aspects of the dark past of Polish-Jewish relations were simply excluded from the collective memory and scholarly history writing.

The official communist representation of Polish-Jewish relations during World War II was based on narratives of symmetry between fates of Poles and Jews, and the solidarity and unity of the great majority of Polish society with its Jewish minority during the Holocaust. This monolithic representation was characterized by distortions and the omission of important historical data. Similar versions of Polish-Jewish relations also persisted in Polish émigré circles, despite the sharp ideological and political differences between the political émigré circles and the communist regime in Poland.

Entirely silenced in the official communist representation was the issue of anti-Jewish acts on the part of individuals and some military and civilian groups. If the issue was publicly mentioned at all, it was treated as a marginal social problem limited to a small and morally degenerate group of society—the so-called *szmalcownicy* (blackmailers and thugs)—regarded as outside the healthy fabric of society, a social group that could, after all, be found in other communities in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Another issue ignored in the official communist representation was the presence of anti-Jewish beliefs and sentiments persistent among various segments of society during the war, and the ongoing genocide of

Jews by the Germans. Furthermore, the issue of indifference or passivity on the part of Polish society toward the plight of Jews was explained solely by reference to external factors—the death penalty imposed by the Nazis on Polish rescuers of Jews, which, as a matter of fact, was a unique form of punishment for such activity in Nazi-occupied Europe; and the interrelated notion of psychological fear of the Germans. The impact of domestic prewar anti-Jewish positions was accorded no relevance in this explanation.

Reports of attempts by Poles to rescue Jews emphasized the number of Polish rescuers without acknowledging the various difficulties and social disapproval they sometimes faced—within their own local communities both during and in the aftermath of the war. In an example from the area of Jedwabne, Antonina Wyrzykowska and her husband, from the hamlet of Janczewka provided refuge for a group of seven Jewish men and women.¹⁰ The group included Szmuel Wasersztajn, a former resident of Jedwabne and the author of key testimony about the Jedwabne massacre.¹¹ Wyrzykowscy sheltered the Jewish fugitives on their farm for twenty-six months between November 1942 and January 1945. In the aftermath of the German defeat in January 1945, she and her husband were harassed and physically abused by neighbors who suspected that they were hiding Jews: Antonina Wyrzykowska was severely beaten. Moreover, they were obliged to move from their home three times, and finally were forced to depart for good from the Jedwabne region.

In the communist era the official one-sided and biased representation of the past was the only publicly available source of historical knowledge about the Polish-Jewish relations during the war, and also about the conduct in those years of the Polish nation (which was understood in an ethnic sense).¹² The image that portrayed the Poles as heroes and victims was based on the impressive historical record of the Polish underground resistance network as well as the record of heavy human and material loss incurred during the war. This collective self-image was disseminated in both history books and popular works, and was publicly accepted and acceptable in the country. Furthermore, in Polish émigré circles a similar collective self-image was also disseminated. One can add that this self-image was selected and shaped according to the paradigm created in Polish romantic literature of the early nineteenth century—a period that witnessed the first major, but failed, national uprisings to regain Poland's independence lost in 1795.

In the new political climate of the early 1980s, brought about by the emergence of the Solidarity movement, the black pages of Polish-Jewish

relations during the Second World War began to be raised again and as a result, the collective self-image of Poles also began to be reviewed with a more critical eye. The anti-ideological Solidarity movement of the early 1980s with its ethos of searching for truth and coming to terms with the dark past can be credited with initiating and providing a forum for developing a self-critical approach towards Polish-Jewish relations. The underground Solidarity press was, in fact, the first forum in which the first adherents of this approach presented their position as a social and moral necessity.¹³

The general contention that has accompanied the self-critical approach, especially after the political transformation of Poland in 1989, has been that a critical examination is essential for the moral health of the Polish nation and because Poland has reentered the community of European sovereign and democratic nation-states. Major goals, therefore, include the reconstruction of a more truthful picture of Polish relations with the Jewish minority and of the collective self-image of Polish society that will encompass multiple images of society.

The first public debate of the 1980s about Polish-Jewish relations during World War II was initiated by the article “The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto,” written by the distinguished literary critic, Jan Błoński. It appeared in the January 1987 issue of *Tygodnik Powszechny*, a Catholic journal of the lay intelligentsia. Historian Antony Polonsky called its appearance the laying of the foundation for the “contemporary history of [the Polish] conscience.”¹⁴

Błoński questioned the mythologized notion of Polish solidarity with its Jewish minority during the Holocaust, and raised difficult issues about “insufficient concern on the part of Poles towards the fate of the Jews during the Holocaust.” He argued that the impact of prewar anti-Jewish beliefs had to be considered as one of the causes of this insufficient concern. He also provided a plausible explanation for the absence of any critical evaluation of Polish-Jewish relations in the Polish collective memory. He asserted that the collective self-image of Poles as only victims meant that the ethnic Polish community was unable to perceive itself as capable of wrongdoing to others.

When we consider the past, we want to derive moral advantages from it. Even when we condemn, we ourselves would like to be above—or beyond—condemnation. We want to be absolutely beyond any accusation, we want to be completely clean. We want to be also—and only—victims.¹⁵

Overall, public reaction to Błoński’s position was accusatory and negative. Still, a small but growing number of members of the cultural

elite began to follow in his steps.¹⁶ Among the most noticeable representatives are the sociologist Hanna Świda-Ziemia, Father Stanislaw Musial, and the distinguished literary critic, Maria Janion.¹⁷ From the late 1990s, their works have been persistent in introducing the dark past as one of the features of Polish social history, and recreating a multifaceted and less one-sided collective image. Some of their works represent a sharp polemic with the self-defensive approach that developed in the 1980s and 1990s in response to the reemergence of the self-critical approach.

What is the self-defensive approach? In general terms it is characterized by a significant level of resistance in accepting the dark past as an important feature of Polish-Jewish relations. Within this approach, it is possible to observe the use of intellectually disturbing strategies aimed at silencing intellectuals who boldly discuss the past.¹⁸ Self-defensive reactions range from omission and minimalization to severe criticism and accusations that the self-critical intellectuals represent anti-Polish positions and interests. The term “anti-polonism” is sometimes used in a very broad and peculiar sense, not limited to arguments that can objectively be classified as anti-Polish—such as equating the Poles with the Nazis—but rather applied to any critical inquiry into the collective past. Moreover, anti-polonism is equated with antisemitism.

Adherents of the self-defensive approach can be divided into two distinct groups. One segment displays various levels of anti-Jewish prejudice ranging from highly-charged aggressive and emotional expressions to more subtle rationalizations of their anti-Jewish sentiments. Moreover, its adherents perceive themselves as protectors of Polish honor and pride—values, they claim, that are frequently attacked by Jewish circles.

The other segment does not display anti-Jewish prejudice, but subscribes (as do the others) to the notion of Poles as heroes and victims only. As a result, there is a severe difficulty in accepting the dark past as part of Poland’s collective history. Furthermore, it considers public display of the dark past as embarrassing and shameful, with negative consequences for Poland, such as undermining of the country’s international position. In its understanding of collective history, this group is also guided by assumptions of national honor and pride and therefore takes up a defensive position against the self-critical approach and its representatives. A variety of these positions have been manifested in the debate about *Neighbors*.

The author of *Neighbors*, Jan Tomasz Gross

Jan Tomasz Gross is a Polish-born American scholar who belongs to the “generation of 1968”—the first to question the communist system in Poland, and from which the future elite of the first Solidarity movement emerged. In his scholarly research, Gross has written extensively on the German and Soviet occupations of Poland, and the Soviet expulsion of Polish citizens.¹⁹

Neighbors is his second monograph written from the perspective of the self-critical approach toward Polish-Jewish relations in World War II. In 1998, Gross published his first book on the subject, *Upiorna Dekada* (Untangled web), which consists of three essays.²⁰ It discusses, in a critical way, a range of important issues such as the impact of the notion of Judeo-communism and other negative perceptions of Jews detected in society during and after the war, and low societal approval for rescue activities of Jews. Like *Neighbors*, *Upiorna Dekada* was also the subject of debate, published in the summer of 1999 in the progressive Catholic monthly *Więź*.²¹ However, in contrast to the debate on *Neighbors*, the discussion about *Upiorna Dekada* was limited to a small group of historians and journalists. Interestingly, the issue of Poles as only victims was also raised in the debate about the *Upiorna Dekada*. One of the writers for *Więź*, Wojciech Wiczorek, pointed out that the myth of victimhood is one of the elements of Polish collective identity that creates an obstacle in accepting responsibility for wrongdoing committed against others, and in rewriting the collective self-image in a more realistic and truthful way.²²

Neighbors

The publication of *Neighbors* in its original Polish version in May 2000 marks the beginning of the most profound battle over the memory of Polish-Jewish relations and the Polish collective self-image.²³ *Neighbors* can also be viewed as one of the most powerful responses to the call of Hanna Świda-Ziemia for Polish intellectuals to “deconstruct at once the distorted popular representation of the history of Polish-Jewish relations and not to leave this task to future generations.”²⁴

In *Neighbors*, Gross presents the most extreme aspect of the dark past—the collective murder of Jews by their ethnic Polish neighbors. He describes in detail one such occurrence—the massacre of Jedwabne

Jews—and links it to a number of other key developments in the history of Poland during World War II: the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland from 1939 to 1941; the response of Polish society to the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in July 1941; and the society's participation in the communist takeover in 1944. The book also addresses the problem of the postwar Polish historiography of the war, and the collective self-image of Poles as only victims. The wide range of problems discussed in *Neighbors* and the critical moral reflection it contains makes the book unique in terms of historical writings on the subject.

Moreover, its mode of narration is also different from that found in conventional history books. Gross takes the reader on a tour of the massacre—during which the reader can “hear” and visualize the killing of the Jedwabne Jews. The reader is exposed to tiny details of the massacre and is confronted with very disturbing images such as that of men playing football with a woman's head. The reader is also exposed face-to-face with individual victims: they have names and personal histories prior to their murder.

There is no doubt that the aim of Gross's mode of narration was to elicit direct and immediate empathy for the victims. In fact, *Neighbors* can be seen as a work bearing witness to the Jedwabne Jews and representing a voice opposing injustice and forgetting. One should remember here that although the Memorial Book for Jedwabne Jews was published in Israel and the United States in 1980, the Jedwabne massacre was mostly a forgotten event.²⁵ In postwar Poland the official memory of the Jedwabne massacre was based on a non-truth that explicitly insulted the memory of the victims. Professional historians, not only in Poland but also in the West, overlooked Jedwabne massacre. A few survivors of the former Jedwabne Jewish community and their children constituted the only social group that kept the memory of the massacre alive.²⁶ It is in this context that one should understand Gross's call for affirmative attitudes towards Jewish victims' testimonies—a call misunderstood by the majority of Gross's critics, who simply accused him of a biased and non-critical approach toward Jewish testimonies, while ignoring the fact that despite various weaknesses, the testimonies nevertheless contain a truthful version of the massacre.

Just as importantly, Gross's narration challenges the self-image of Poles as only victims. Ethnic Poles from Jedwabne are depicted as vicious murderers who showed no mercy to their Jewish victims. These images provide a shocking contrast to the cherished self-image of Poles as martyrs and heroes, and the interlinked image of Poles as key witnesses to the Holocaust who overwhelmingly demonstrated solidarity

toward the Polish Jews. According to Gross, deconstruction of the image of the Polish “victim” is necessary for the health of the Polish nation that has long swept its dark past under the carpet and thus has lived a lie. This, in turn, led to the development of pathological reactions concerning the collective past and present: Poles have always been ready to “defend Poland’s good name” and blame “the others for any setbacks and difficulties.” Gross, of course, is fully aware that such pathology on a collective level is not solely a Polish problem. He explicitly calls for putting an end to it by rewriting the Polish collective history in a more balanced and truthful manner: “And like several other nations, in order to reclaim its own past, Poland will have to tell its past to itself anew.”²⁷

Undoubtedly *Neighbors* succeeded in generating the most intensive and long-lasting public debate in post-communist Poland, one that has also been echoed in France, Germany, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Gross’s book has been translated into English, German, French, Italian, and Hebrew. Given the international nature of the debate about *Neighbors*, it is important to bear in mind that the discussions about the book outside of Poland should be treated in the national context of the respective communities: the importance and meaning that the book connotes are different for each of the communities.²⁸ For example, in the case of the German debate about *Neighbors*, the main issue brought up was how Germany with its own dark past regarding both Jews and Poles during the Second World War should respond to the fact that the collective murder of Jedwabne Jews was committed by a group of civilian Poles and not the agents of Nazi Germany.²⁹ Some German voices argued for abstaining from comment and not passing judgment on the Polish community; others engaged in a critical evaluation of Polish society and Polish forms of antisemitism. In the case of Israel, the main concerns presented by historian Shimon Redlich in the first review of *Neighbors* in the daily *Haaretz* were over the potential negative impact of the truth about Jedwabne massacre on Polish-Jewish relations, especially the potential reinforcement of highly negative and incorrect perceptions of Poles in some Jewish circles.³⁰ Western Europeans and Americans voiced concerns about the cultivation of respect for and tolerance of minorities in multi-ethnic communities and condemnation of interethnic hatred.³¹

In the Polish context, the book raised salient issues such as the rewriting of the history of Polish-Jewish relations and the reevaluation of uncritical approaches toward modern national history. Given the enormous wave of public interest in *Neighbors*, one can actually talk about the “Gross phenomenon” or “Gross effect.” Some already compare the

impact of *Neighbors* on Polish society to the impact on German society of Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, published in Germany in 1996.³² *Neighbors*, observed Dorota Krawczynska in her review, "The Truth Hidden below the Surface," is a book whose real significance will be eventually recognized by Poles.³³ What can definitely be stated at present is that *Neighbors* has secured an important place within the history of the memory of Polish Jewry and within the development of the self-critical stance toward Poland's collective past.

Approaches towards *Neighbors* and the Jedwabne Massacre

The debate about *Neighbors* and the Jedwabne massacre can be seen as unique in many respects. From the start, all previous debates of the 1980s and 1990s on the history of Polish-Jewish relations lasted just a few months, whereas the debate about Jedwabne has been carried out with varying intensity for approximately two years. Previous debates were conducted in a limited number of newspapers, whereas this one has been conducted in a wide range of national and local papers of differing ideological orientations and different social and cultural interests. Moreover, the debate has also reached other mass media such as television, radio, and the Internet. It has also been accompanied by a number of commemorative events, including mourning for the Jewish victims and penitential sermons.

Most importantly, the debate on *Neighbors* is the first in which leading members of the political elite have taken an active role. Furthermore, it is the first in which the president of Poland has given public support for the critical approach toward the history of Polish-Jewish relations and collective self-image of Poles.³⁴ It is also the first in which the voice of critical approach is not solely that of an individual—Gross—but has come from members of the cultural and political elite as well as the non-elite. All these developments indicate that the critical approach has gained more supporters within society than ever before, a positive development, which will hopefully lead to the normalization of the history of Polish-Jewish relations and to the creation of a more realistic and pluralistic collective image of Poles.

The critical approach has been presented in well-known national dailies such as *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita* and the liberal weekly *Wprost*, as well as the two progressive Catholic journals, the weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* and the monthly *Więź*. The strong self-defensive position has mainly been presented in a variety of nationalistic, conservative, and Catholic papers.³⁵ The most influential of these is the

daily *Nasz Dziennik*, associated with the highly controversial Radio Maryja run by Father Tadeusz Rydzyk. Other papers include the weeklies *Angora*, *Mysł Polska*, *Niedziela*, *Najwyższy Czas*, *Tygodnik Głos*, *Tygodnik Solidarność* and also *Życie*.

Within the debate it is possible to differentiate four major stages. Each of the stages is accompanied by particular developments, which are either manifestations of a critical approach or defensive approaches.

The Early Stage of the Debate: May–November 2000

From May to November 2000, there was rather low public interest in Poland in either the book or the events that had taken place in Jedwabne. A few weeks before the publication of the Polish edition of *Neighbors*, Andrzej Kaczyński published his article, “Calopalenie” (Burn alive) in *Rzeczpospolita* (May 5, 2000).³⁶ He outlined the history of the Jedwabne massacre as presented in the Polish postwar historical writings and in Jewish testimonies, and also described the uneasy and hostile reactions of the contemporary local community of Jedwabne toward those inquiring about the event. Kaczyński was also the first journalist to draw attention to Jan Gross’s research on Jedwabne, referring to Gross’s earlier publication of Szmuel Wassersztajn’s testimony, and to his lecture, “Jews and their Polish Neighbors: The Case of Jedwabne during the Soviet Occupation in the Summer of 1940.” The lecture had been presented at the April 2000 conference on Polish-Jewish Relations during and after the Holocaust: New Perspectives, held at Yeshiva University in New York.³⁷

The extreme Right nationalist press was the first to react to news stories about the Jedwabne massacre and Kaczyński’s article. On May 10, *Nasza Polska* published an article “Prostujemy kłamstwa o pogromie” (We are amending lies about the pogrom) by Leon Kalewski, and on May 13, *Nasz Dziennik* published “Kto fałszuje historie” (Who falsifies history?) by Jerzy Robert Nowak. Both authors were highly critical of Kaczyński and Gross, and brought forth three elements often to be repeated in the self-defensive approach. First, they claimed that the massacre of Jedwabne Jews was conducted by the Germans and not by the local ethnic Polish community. They further claimed that it was the Poles who suffered at the hands of Jews during the war, since Judeo-communist oppression was the main feature of the Soviet occupation of the eastern Polish territories between late September 1939 and June 1941. Lastly they insisted that Kaczyński and Gross are simply “liars” who falsify Polish history, and that their works are typical of the “anti-

Polish Jewish conspiracy” which aims to extract huge sums of money and slander the good name of the Polish state and its people.

However, first-rate unbiased investigative reports were published in the summer of 2000 about the massacre and the way the local Jedwabne community had dealt with the memory of the crime. Journalists Maria Kaczyńska, Gabriela Szczęsna, and Adam Willma published articles in the regional press of northern Poland; Jarosław Lipszyc published “Sąsiedzi i ich wnuki” (Neighbors and their grandchildren) in *Midrasz*, the social and cultural monthly of the Jewish community in Poland.³⁸ These articles revealed something of the extent to which the Jedwabne Polish community had suppressed memory of the crime, as well as the latent anti-Jewish prejudice to be found there—a prejudice that came to be expressed more openly in the next stages of the public debate. The articles also served to confirm the main thesis of Gross’s book—that it was the local ethnic Poles, not the Germans, who had perpetrated the massacre.

Polish state authorities made two important decisions in that summer—to conduct an appropriate commemoration of the Jewish victims of the Jedwabne massacre, and, in August, to initiate an official investigation into the crime. Jerzy Buzek, prime minister at the time, chose Prof. Leon Kieres, chairman of the Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (IPN, Institute of National Memory), to head the investigating committee, along with prosecutor Radosław Ignatiew. For two years they wrestled with the task in a climate of strong criticism from nationalist political circles.

The IPN is a young institution occupied with what Prof. Andrzej Paczkowski calls “transitional justice.”³⁹ Created by law on December 18, 1998, it began its work in July 2000 under the chairmanship of Prof. Kieres, a lawyer and former Senator. Its major role is to investigate Nazi as well as communist crimes against the Polish nation and against humanity. The IPN is also responsible for collecting the files of the communist secret police and making them accessible to the public, especially those victimized by the communist regime. Its other major role is to conduct scholarly research and to educate the public about modern Polish history in the 1939–1989 period. Research and educational activities about the genocide of European Jews is one of the primary goals of the institute.

Intensification of the Debate: November 2000–May 2001

The second stage of the debate—very intense and emotional—began in the second half of November 2000 and lasted until the end of May 2001.

The critical approach and a variety of mild and strongly defensive approaches towards *Neighbors* and the Jedwabne massacre were developed and expressed. One can argue that this stage represented the most intellectually stimulating part of the debate; it produced a huge number of important articles, commentaries, and essays.

The beginning of the second stage was marked by the publication of “Každy sąsiad ma imię” (Every neighbor has a name) in the daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* (November 18), by the well-known and highly respected journalist Jacek Żakowski. In the same issue, Żakowski also published “Diabelskie szczegóły” (The devil is in the details), an interview with Tomasz Szarota, one of the leading historians of the Second World War in Poland.⁴⁰ Both articles adopted a critical stance towards *Neighbors*, and can be classified as mildly defensive and primarily driven by the notions of saving national honor and pride.

Żakowski, who expressed shock at the news of the participation of Poles in the Jedwabne massacre, accused Gross for what he [Żakowski] understood as of an unjustified use of the concept of collective guilt upon Polish society. He also accused Gross of using language that, according to him, would only incite ethnic and racial hatred, would lead to a deterioration of Polish-Jewish relations. In the interview, Szarota—despite acknowledging the importance of *Neighbors*—charged Gross with writing the “sociology” and “not the history” of the event. He also dwelt on methodological weaknesses of *Neighbors*, and stressed that there was a clear lack of evidence to determine the actual scale of Polish participation in the Jedwabne massacre and the reasons for such participation.

Gross has forced us to change our views about the subject of attitudes of Poles during the Second World War, and that is an unquestionable service. Like you, however, I have the impression that he wrote *Neighbors* too hurriedly and examined the Jedwabne affair too superficially for us to be able to understand what really happened there.⁴¹

Gross responded to Żakowski and Szarota in “Mord Zrozumiały” (The justifiable murder), in which he defended his thesis and pointed out Żakowski’s and Szarota’s inconsistent arguments and defensiveness.⁴²

Gross’s position was supported by a number of intellectuals who are non-historians—anthropologists Dariusz Czaja and Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, psychologist Krystyna Skarżyńska, sociologist Jacek Kurczewski, and the well-known journalist, Dawid Warszawski.⁴³ All of them criticized Żakowski for relativizing the issue of responsibility for the crime, and all saw the concept of Poles as only victims as a major

obstacle in coming to terms with the Polish participation in the Jedwabne massacre. They also reflected on the pathological social and cultural effects on contemporary society of the belief in Polish victimhood. Moreover, Skarżyńska's article, "Zbiorowa wyobraźnia, wspólna wina" (Collective imagination, common guilt), which described the psychological roots of the inability to reckon with the dark past, called for the deconstruction of the prevailing patterns of Polish collective memory and social identity.

It is understandable that we experience psychological discomfort when our own community is blamed for serious sins. An inclusion of cruelty towards others into the national collective memory entirely disagrees with one's own self-image. Its acceptance is almost impossible for people who are convinced that they have usually been the victims and victims only.... What is urgently required is a debate on our collective memory and social identity and an attempt at deconstructing our past self-image.⁴⁴

Other critics of Żakowski's position—journalist Halina Bortnowska and the writer Wojciech Sadurski—also referred to Skarżyńska's critical evaluation of Polish innocence as a constructive model for challenging the old ways of thinking. They also called for eradication of any traces of xenophobic and antisemitic stereotypes in society.⁴⁵

For some of Gross's supporters, this was the beginning of a more frequent engagement in the debate. Jacek Kurczewski, Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, and David Warszawski contributed a number of commentaries and essays on the Jedwabne massacre and its moral implications and on a wide variety of social and ethical problems raised by the event.⁴⁶ Halina Bortnowska wrote a poem, "Psalm dla pielgrzymów do Jedwabnego" (Psalm for the pilgrims to Jedwabne), which appeared in *Gazeta Wyborcza* a month before the official commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the massacre.⁴⁷ The nationalist press labelled this group of authors "flagellators" (*biczownicy*) who represent an anti-Polish position.

In the winter of 2001, two progressive Catholic intellectuals, Jarosław Gowin and Stefan Wilkanowicz, associated with the monthly *Znak*, joined the debate. Both focused on the issue of the "good and dark pasts" of collective national history and the moral and intellectual obligations of passing on knowledge about both pasts to future generations. They discussed the meaning of patriotism and national duty in contemporary society, and expressed a need for a more open understanding of patriotism, which, as stated by Wilkanowicz, would encompass tolerance and responsibility for the "other." Gowin wrote:

We have a responsibility to pass on our heritage to the next generations: passing on the memory of us as heroes is our duty; passing on the memory of Polish crimes against others should constitute a warning for the future.”⁴⁸

And Wilkanowicz remarked:

We have an obligation to absorb and pass on even the most uncomfortable and challenging information. This is a general obligation that stems not only from our self-interest properly understood, but also from a sense of responsibility and solidarity with others.... In our civilization, the degree of ever-widening interdependence is constantly growing, while at the same time it is becoming more fragile and more vulnerable to perturbation.... Patriotism of today should be at once local, national, and global.”⁴⁹

Another important exchange of opinion took place between Gross and Tomasz Strzembosz, a historian from the Catholic University in Lublin and member of the Institute of Polish Political Studies in Warsaw. The exchange centered on the history of the massacre and its political and social context. It serves as a good example of the spectrum of arguments used against Gross by other historians and journalists representing a strongly defensive position containing rationalized negative stereotypes of Jews. Strzembosz, regarded in Poland as one of the most respectable historians of the Polish history of World War II, attacked *Neighbors* in a number of articles that appeared in *Rzeczpospolita* between January and May 2001.

In the first article, with the significant title “Przemilczana kolaboracja” (Covered-up collaboration), Strzembosz criticized Gross for presenting an untruthful version of events and provided his own evaluation of the historical background to the massacre.⁵⁰ Characteristically, the article was not concerned directly with the Jedwabne massacre and its Jewish victims—to whom Strzembosz dedicated a single sentence—but served one purpose only: to show ethnic Poles in a good light and Polish Jews in a bad light. Strzembosz not only applied different categories of judgment toward both communities, but he also oversimplified or even distorted the history of the German occupation of Poland in relation to the history of the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland, in order to neutralize the criminal nature of the Jedwabne massacre.

Strzembosz’s main argument was that prior to the German occupation of the eastern territories in June 1941, Polish Jews willingly

served as the chief agents of Soviet anti-Polish politics. He categorized them as “traitors of the Polish state” and “collaborators with the mortal enemy of Poles,” who welcomed the invasion of the Soviet army and were later responsible for the suffering of thousands of ethnic Poles who were taken to Siberia in 1940. In contrast, Strzembosz claimed, the ethnic Polish population acted honorably throughout the Soviet occupation. Moreover, the suffering experienced under the Soviet occupation was so enormous that the Poles welcomed the German army in June 1941. This was interpreted by Strzembosz as an understandable act of desperation, which did not reflect negatively on Poles as a community.

Apart from a small group of communists in towns and even smaller ones in the countryside, the Polish population responded to the USSR’s aggression and the imposed Soviet system on those territories, the same way it had reacted to the German aggression.... In contrast, the Jewish population, especially youths and poor town-dwellers, staged a mass welcome to the invading army and took part in introducing the new order....”⁵¹

In his next article, “Inny obraz sąsiadów” (A different picture of the neighbors), Strzembosz insisted that the Germans and not the ethnic Poles were responsible for the Jedwabne massacre.⁵² He also claimed that individual Jewish testimonies used by Gross are unreliable sources, while at the same time insisting that Polish testimonies were reliable. Finally he dismissed *Neighbors* altogether as a “weak” and “fake” work that could not be taken seriously as historical writing. Four younger historians, Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, Bogdan Musiał, Leszek Żebrowski, and Roman Gontarczyk endorsed Strzembosz’s position.⁵³ The nationalist press came to cite them as the chief historical authorities on both Gross’s book and on the Jedwabne massacre.⁵⁴

Gross replied to Strzembosz’s two articles in early April,⁵⁵ Jacek Kurczewski and two historians of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, Zofia Borzymińska and Rafal Żebrowski, joined Gross in a critical evaluation of Strzembosz’s arguments. They called the manipulation of the concept of “Judeo-communism” in connection with the Jedwabne massacre both historically false and unethical.⁵⁶ They also pointed out that Strzembosz implied the existence of two truths about the Jedwabne massacre: a “Jewish truth” and a “Polish truth.”⁵⁷ In an introduction to the first collection of articles dedicated to Jedwabne published by *Więź*, Israel Gutman, the eminent Israeli historian of Polish Jewry, also criticized Strzembosz’s position: “Although he does not say

so clearly, these words suggest a certain tit-for-tat approach to Jedwabne—you hurt us, so now we'll hurt you!"⁵⁸

Gutman's critical analysis of Strzembosz's "Przemilczana kolaboracja" led to a further exchange between the two historians—a small debate within the larger one.⁵⁹ In this small debate, Strzembosz's use of the concept of "Judeo-communism" as a way of rationalizing and justifying the crime became a narrative frequently recycled by various representatives of the strong self-defensive position. The most elaborate and aggressive version was circulated in the extreme nationalist press, in which the Soviet occupation of Polish territory was frequently called the "Soviet-Jewish occupation." Moreover, discussion of the Jedwabne massacre lacked even the notion of tit-for-tat—"Jews hurting Poles and Poles hurting Jews." Instead, from the beginning, the focus was on how Jews hurt Poles during the war, and still want to hurt them even today. A good example is the article by Jerzy Robert Nowak in the March 24, 2001 edition of *Tygodnik Głos*. The title itself indicated the author's endorsement of the "reversed version of the history of the Jedwabne massacre"—"Jak żydowscy sąsiedzi tępiłi katolików" (How Jewish neighbors eradicated Catholics).⁶⁰

The second phase also saw the beginning of the involvement of the political elite. On March 2, 2001, Polish president Aleksander Kwaśniewski, in an interview for the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Abaronot*, acknowledged the participation of local Poles in the mass killing of Jedwabne Jews.⁶¹ He promised to apologize publicly for the massacre, on behalf of the Polish nation, at the sixtieth anniversary ceremonies to be held on July 10, 2001. This was Kwaśniewski's first public pronouncement, among many others in which he spoke of the need for the Poles to be honest and brave in facing the historical facts about the Jedwabne massacre; he stressed the need for a profound moral reflection about the crime. His remarks immediately drew fire from nationalist spokesmen, who rejected his call to reexamine the meaning of the events, and who refused to acknowledge any need to make an apology.

Immediately attacking Kwaśniewski was Antoni Macierewicz, one of the main figures in the Christian National Movement, who later became one of the heads of the Liga Polskich Rodzin (League of Polish Families). In a series of articles published in *Tygodnik Głos* between March and April 2001, Macierewicz, like Strzembosz, drew a distinction between "Polish truth" and "Jewish truth" about the massacre, and accused Kwaśniewski of supporting the latter. He also labeled both Kwaśniewski and Gross as "disseminators of political lies against the Polish nation" and "followers of the Secret Communist Police in their

hateful treatment of the Polish nation.”⁶² Macierewicz’s official protest against Kwaśniewski, “Oskarżam Aleksandra Kwaśniewskiego” (My accusations against Aleksander Kwaśniewski) was placed on the Christian National Movement (Ruch Katolicko-Narodowy) website.⁶³ Macierewicz’s arguments changed little throughout the course of the national debate, and remained representative of the views of the League of Polish Families and the entire spectrum of extreme nationalist political and social groups.

In contrast, individual politicians from the *Unia Wolności* (UW, Union of Freedom) party rooted in the first Solidarity movement of 1980s, embraced the self-critical approach and made profound reflections about the moral implications of the massacre for contemporary society.⁶⁴ Two good examples of this position are “Nienawiść do ofiary” (Hatred directed at the victim) by Jacek Kuroń and “Płonąca stodoła i ja” (The burning barn and I) by Waldemar Kuczynski.⁶⁵ Kuroń and Henryk Wujec of the UW were coauthors of an appeal for active participation in prayers of repentance in Jedwabne on July 10, 2001.⁶⁶ Prof. Bronisław Geremek, then head of the UW issued an open letter to Aleksander Kwaśniewski calling for the political elite to take a uniform position on the Jedwabne massacre.⁶⁷

The General Council of the former communist party, the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), which won the parliamentary election later in September 2001, voiced an opinion similar to that of President Kwaśniewski.⁶⁸ In March 2001, the Council issued the letter “Dziedziczymy nie tylko chwałę” (We are not inheritors of just the glory) to its members and supporters.

Equally important is the participation from the early spring of 2001 of the Roman Catholic Church. Like the political and cultural elite, the Catholic Church found itself divided into two main camps. The group representing the “Open Church” adopted a critical stance toward the past representation of Polish-Jewish relations and the collective self-image of Poles as only victims, in contrast to the defensive “Closed Church,” which adopted a variety of mild to strongly defensive approaches containing either rationalized or explicitly aggressive and vulgar anti-Jewish stereotypes.⁶⁹

The position taken by Cardinal Józef Glemp can be seen as a good example of the defensive approach containing rationalized anti-Jewish stereotypes. Glemp addressed the Jedwabne massacre in two skillfully prepared interviews. The first was aired on Warsaw Catholic Radio station Józef on March 4, 2001, and the second, conducted by representatives of the Catholic Information Agency, was made public on

May 15.⁷⁰ In the first radio address, Glemp spoke about the undisputed participation of Poles in the crime and suggested joint prayers by Christians and Jews for the victims. He also referred to “generational responsibility” for the sins of the ancestors, and spoke of the need for apology and asking God and the “children of those who suffered” for forgiveness. At the same time, he minimized the crime by implying that its scope depends on finding “objective truth” about the circumstances in which it was committed. Glemp called it a “blown up matter” (*sprawa nagłośniona*)—a term that came into frequent use by other representatives of the strong self-defensive positions. In the May interview, Glemp’s position leaned even more toward the extreme self-defensive position, and contained direct anti-Jewish stereotypes.⁷¹ He backtracked on the matter of the indisputable participation of Poles in the crime, and went on to discuss Polish-Jewish relations. He denied the existence of prewar and wartime antisemitism, yet he attributed the rise of anti-Jewish feelings in the ethnic Polish community to the behavior of Jews who took economic advantage of the Poles, supported communism, and followed strange customs.

Bishop Stanisław Stefanek of the Łomża diocese took a strong defensive position in his sermon on March 11, 2001 at Jedwabne, in which he noted the “unusual attack on Jedwabne” and the “aggressive, biased modern campaign, which reaches wide circles.”⁷² Like Cardinal Glemp, he referred to the “great unknowns” in the case, and voiced his concern about the moral obligation of seeking the truth. One could argue that his concern for the “truth” springs from his rejection of the fact of Polish participation in the massacre: if the truth is not on our side, then it cannot be found out, and therefore cannot be the truth.

Father Henryk Jankowski, pastor of St. Brigida Church in Gdańsk, however, provided the most extreme manifestation of the anti-Jewish defensive position. In early April 2001, he decorated the “Grave of Jesus Christ” that was part of a Lenten shrine with a replica of the charred barn of Jedwabne and the slogans “Jews killed Jesus, the prophets, and also persecuted us”; “Poles save Poland”; and “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” He thus presented the Poles as the true victims. Archbishop Tadeusz Gocłowski of Gdańsk ordered Jankowski to dismantle the exhibit.⁷³

One should note, however, a quite different Grave of Christ model created by Rev. Wojciech Lemański in his small parish in Otwock, in which he expressed sorrow and apologized for the death of the Jedwabne Jewish community.⁷⁴

Calls for ethical reflections, an emphasis on apology for the sin, along with empathy and expressions of solidarity with the Jewish victims and condemnation of antisemitism past and present, were the main aspects of the Open Church's position. *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Więź* were the two main papers in which Catholic clergy took this position.⁷⁵

A good early example is the article, "Banalizacja Barbarzyństwa" (Banalization of barbarity) published in *Więź* in March 2001. Archbishop Józef Życiński, the Metropolitan of Lublin, here made a profound statement on the meaning of the Jedwabne massacre and the lessons that contemporary society can draw from it. He described it as a "moral evil" which "bears a bitter lesson of truth about mankind." He condemned any form of relativization of the crime and called for the acceptance of the "painful truth" about the nature of the sin committed there. He concluded with a call for showing empathy with the victims:

Today, we need to pray for the victims of the massacre, displaying spiritual solidarity that was missing at the hour when they left the land of their fathers. In the name of those who looked upon their death with indifference, we need to repeat David's words: "I have sinned against the Lord..."⁷⁶

Archbishop Henryk Muszyński, Metropolitan of Gniezno expressed a similar position in an interview with *Tygodnik Powszechny*, published on March 25, 2001.⁷⁷ He frankly addressed the participation of local Polish members of the Jedwabne community in the massacre and raised the issue of moral responsibility toward the victims. He stressed the need for a dignified commemoration of the victims and finding some form of redress. Similar views were later expressed by the former secretary of the episcopate and present rector of the Papal Theological Academy in Kraków, Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek.⁷⁸

During the winter and spring of 2001, the public became actively involved in the debate, particularly through the internet discussion groups set up by *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Polityka*, and *Wprost*. Their voices represent important data for any future analysis of the public reaction to *Neighbors* and the Jedwabne massacre.⁷⁹

That period was also very intense not only in terms of the number of publications about the massacre, but also in terms of the large number of accompanying events. Among the most important were the two diplomatic visits to the United States by Polish state representatives—that of Leon Kieres, chairman of the IPN, in February 2001; and that of then Minister of Foreign Affairs Władysław Bartoszewski in April 2001.⁸⁰ The latter coincided with the appearance on the American market of the English version of *Neighbors* published by Princeton University

Press. Both visits revealed that Polish state authorities and the IPN were committed to coming to terms with the involvement of ethnic Poles in the Jedwabne massacre, rejecting defensive strategies to minimize or justify the crime.

The IPN organized educational activities in April 2001 for teachers in Jedwabne, as well as of Radzillów and Wąsacz, where similar collective murders of the Jewish community by the Polish population took place. The IPN efforts were aimed at preparing the local cultural elite to disseminate among the younger generation both the difficult truth about these events and general knowledge about the Holocaust. This was an important practical step in introducing the critical approach to Polish-Jewish relations.

Among other major events occurring in April 2001 was the screening of the documentary *Sąsiedzi* (Neighbors) on Polish Television's Channel 2. The film was made by Agnieszka Arnold in the late 1990s and early 2000s.⁸¹ Eleven months later, the film received the prestigious Polish Award of Wielkiej Fundacji Kultury. The film explores how the contemporary local community of Jedwabne remembers the crime, including individuals who hold a strongly defensive position, such as the daughter of the owner of the barn in which Jews were murdered, as well as Father Edward Orłowski and the Laudańscy brothers, who participated in the massacre. Others interviewed in the film include rescuers of the Jedwabne Jews and their family members, and Marianna Ramotowska, a Jewish woman who remained in the Jedwabne area after the war and married her rescuer, Stanisław Ramotowski.

The film provides insights into the patterns of individual repression of the dark past, as well as individual revolt against such repression on the part of the younger family members of the former rescuers of Jews. The screening of the film was accompanied by a frank discussion in which Leon Kieres, Marek Siwiec (Spokesman for the President of Poland), and Marek Urbański (Spokesman for the Prime Minister) were participants. All three acknowledged the fact that ethnic Poles had taken an active part in the Jedwabne massacre, and they reflected on the meaning of this crime for contemporary Polish society. Their reactions can be viewed as an attempt at preparing society at large to accept the difficult truth about the massacre and at reevaluating the old predominant way of thinking about the collective past.

Another important event took place on March 15, 2001—the removal of the previous monument to the Jewish victims of Jedwabne massacre that had been erected in 1963 by the Łomża section of the Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (*Związek Bojowników o Wolność i*

Demokrację, ZBOWiD). The inscription on the previous plaque had read: “The place of destruction of the Jewish population. Here Gestapo and Nazi gendarmes burnt alive 1600 people on 10 July 1941.”

Simultaneous “counter-events” emerged as well. In early March 2001, the Committee to Defend the Good Name of Jedwabne (*Komitet Obrony Dobrego Imienia Jedwabne*) was established. It was dubbed a “Polish version of the Ku Klux Klan” by one of its critics, Tadeusz Slobodzianek.⁸² According to one of the committee’s founders, Michał Kamiński, at that time an MP of the Christian Democratic Union (*Stowarzyszenie Chrześcijańsko-Demokratyczne*), the organization was set up to protest the “world campaign of slander against Jedwabne and against the whole of Poland.”⁸³ From the start, the Committee received support from two senators, Jadwiga Stokarska and Jan Chojnowski of Action Solidarity, which at the time was still the main party of the governmental coalition.⁸⁴ These politicians declared on their own accord (i.e., not in the name of the party) that the local population of Jedwabne was the victim of the debate and they protested “digging into the past.” Instead of helping the community to come to terms with the town’s dark past, such support only contributed to reinforcing the defensive approach.⁸⁵

The Commemorative Ceremony of July 10, 2001

The third stage of the debate began at the end of May and ended in September 2001. Discussion focused on the official commemoration of the massacre that took place on its sixtieth anniversary, July 10, 2001. Crucial considerations were the importance and meaning of the commemoration both nationally and internationally, as well as its impact on Polish society. A clear split was visible between the critical and defensive positions. As a rule, those taking the critical approach welcomed the event as an important and necessary step in coming to terms with the Jedwabne crime and as a symbolic cleansing from one’s own dark past. Furthermore, the event was viewed as the opening of a new chapter in relations with the Jewish community in Poland and abroad and proved that Poland had become a democratic state, which respects and cherishes its multi-ethnic past. Those who took the defensive stance condemned the event as a “national scandal defiling the good name of Poland.” The participants, they claimed, were “traitors to Poland serving Jewish interests.”

Rev. Michał Czajkowski, a leading representative of the critical approach, ironically reflected that

Those who really love Poland and serve her “good name” in the world are those who are labeled as traitors, oppressors of

the Polish nation, servants of Zionism...communists, moral relativists....⁸⁶

Preceding the commemoration was a special penitential mass on May 27, 2001 at the Church of All Saints in Warsaw. We should recall that Cardinal Glemp, in his statement on March 4 of that year, had refused to accept the suggestion of joint prayers to be held for the victims at the site of the crime (as proposed by President Kwaśniewski). Despite its controversial origin, the penitential mass proved to be a significant event in the history of the Polish Roman Catholic Church in its relations with Jews.⁸⁷ Fifty bishops—a third of the Polish episcopate—took part and voiced an “apology for the sins of Christians towards Jews.” Glemp himself led the mass, and Bishop Stefan Gądecki opened the liturgy, expressing his hope that crimes like the Jedwabne massacre, Auschwitz, and Katyn would never happen again.⁸⁸

The official ceremony of 10 July 2001, however, was also preceded by a number of events that clearly represented the strongly self-defensive stance on the massacre. There was, for example, the appearance of anti-Gross books, which were freely circulated in bookshops around the country. The titles speak for themselves: *100 kłamstw J. T. Grossa o żydowskich sąsiadach w Jedwabnem* (One hundred lies of Jan Tomasz Gross about the Jewish neighbors in Jedwabne), *Jedwabne gwałty* (The lies about Jedwabne), and *Operacja Jedwabne—mity i fakty* (Operation Jedwabne—myths and facts).⁸⁹ The campaign against Gross intensified in the nationalist press, where *Neighbors* was viewed as the main cause behind the “anti-Polish” ceremony.

At Jedwabne itself, the defensive position was apparent in the ceremony at which the local high school was officially named after Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński—the outspoken head of the Catholic Church in Poland during the communist era—rather than the name of Antonina Wyrzykowska, a wartime rescuer of Jedwabne Jews. At this ceremony, historian Tomasz Strzembosz, already well-known as the major critic of Jan Tomasz Gross, delivered a controversial speech in which he compared the current situation in Jedwabne to the battle for Westerplatte, implying that the citizens of Jedwabne, like the Polish soldiers in September 1939, were engaged in a heroic struggle against some kind of “national enemy.”⁹⁰

Various calls for boycotting the commemoration were issued by the nationalist political parties and press. The Movement for the Rebirth of Poland (*Ruch Odbudowy Polski*) called upon politicians in important public positions not to participate, and voiced its protest against the forthcoming apology of Aleksander Kwaśniewski.⁹¹

The Committee to Defend the Good Name of Jedwabne, headed by its priest, Rev. Edward Orłowski, distributed leaflets entitled “Jedwabne does not apologize,” and calling upon the local population not to take part.⁹²

Despite these developments, the commemoration can be considered a significant watershed in the history of Polish-Jewish relations.⁹³ In the first part of the ceremony, President Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Israel’s ambassador, Shevah Weiss, spoke. The second segment included prayers offered by Rabbi Jacob Baker of New York (a prewar resident of Jedwabne) and Michael Schudrich (Chief Rabbi of Warsaw and Łódź) at the new memorial for the victims; Joseph Malovany of New York sang the prayer *El male rachamim*, a traditional Jewish prayer for the dead.

An additional ceremony took place later that day at the Evangelical Augsburg Church in Warsaw, at which then-Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek hosted a special concert dedicated to the memory of the victims of the tragedy in Jedwabne.

Approximately a thousand individuals participated in the Jedwabne ceremony, including relatives of the Jewish victims, representatives of the Polish-American and American Jewish communities, and of the German episcopate. Władysław Bartoszewski and two of Poland’s Parliamentary vice-speakers, Marek Borowski of the Democratic Left Alliance and Jan Król of the Union of Freedom, along with Leszek Miller (head of the Democratic Left Alliance) and Bronisław Geremek (head of Union of Freedom) participated. Delegations of the Polish Society of the Righteous Among Nations and the Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej (Catholic Intelligentsia Club), and a number of individual Poles were also present.

Absent at the ceremony were representatives of all Polish nationalist and conservative political parties and movements; nor was there any official delegation from the Polish episcopate. Except for Jedwabne mayor Krzysztof Godlewski and Town Council chairman Stanisław Michałowski, the majority of the town’s citizens, guided by their priest, Father Orłowski, boycotted the ceremony.

Afterward, the nationalist press labeled it “the Jewish celebration,” “Jewish chutzpa,” and “the siege of Jedwabne.” Bishop Stanisław Stefanek of the Łomża diocese described it as an event orchestrated by “an alien group” that “came to Jedwabne under the heavy guard of policemen, did its program and left.” He insisted that the ceremony’s real aims were to disgrace the Poles and to claim from them huge sums of money.⁹⁴

The most criticized element of the ceremony was the speech of President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, in which he said:

Thanks to the great national debate on the crime of 10 July 1941, much has changed in our lives in this year 2001, the first year of the new millennium. We have come to realize our responsibilities for our attitudes toward the black pages of our history. We have understood that those who counsel the nation to reject this past serve the nation ill. Such a posture leads to moral destruction.... We express our pain and shame and give expression to our determination in seeking to learn the truth. We express our courage to overcome the bad past and our unbending will for understanding and harmony. Because of this crime we should beg the shadows of the dead and their families forgiveness. Because of that, today, as a citizen and the President of the Polish Republic, I apologize. I apologize in the name of those Poles whose conscience is moved by the crime. In name of those who believe that one cannot be proud of the magnificent Polish history without feeling simultaneously pain and shame for wrongs that Poles caused to others.⁹⁵

The defensive camp interpreted Kwaśniewski's speech as an insult to the memory of Poles who suffered under the communist regime. Tomasz Strzembosz condemned Kwaśniewski for making a unique apology for the murder of the Jedwabne Jews whom, he stressed, "no-one asked what was their attitude toward the Polish state and Polish nation;" and for not apologizing in the same way for communist crimes committed against the Poles. In his twisted logic, Strzembosz even implied that Kwaśniewski is an antisemite—since he made a unique distinction between Jews and Poles.

Moreover, Kwaśniewski's apology was seen as a slander against Poland, dishonoring the Polish nation and the Polish polity. The outcome of this apology, it was claimed, would lead to Poland being equated with Nazi Germany in its responsibility for the Holocaust. Such thinking reflects a great deal of insecurity and a lack of intellectual sophistication: its adherents use provocative and false ideas such as "Poland equals Nazi Germany" and "the collective responsibility of the Poles for the Jedwabne massacre"—and project them onto their opponents. They are incapable of grasping reality in a rational way and unable to be open to the arguments of the other party.

In the critical camp, the apology was seen as a sign of moral strength, a break with the dark past, and offered the possibility of a completely

new start in Polish-Jewish relations. The Polish president provided his own explanation for his words in an article in *Polityka* on July 14, 2001:

I would like to stress that apology does not mean an accusation of the Polish nation. The words of apology constitute a reflection over the crime and are expression of sorrow that a crime was committed by neighbors on their neighbors, by Polish citizens against other Polish citizens.... Apology is not an accusation, but constitutes a bridge leading towards rapprochement [between Poles and Jews]. We wish to leave the ghostly silence behind, overcome the lies of the past and not to hide the truth anymore. On 10 July we have been given a chance to overcome the bad past and become better [people].⁹⁶

Ten months later, the eminent Polish philosopher, Barbara Skarga, offered similar reflections about the nature and importance of the apology. Her thoughts were, to some degree, provoked by her observations of the reactions of the defensive camp towards the commemoration. Skarga began by criticizing the common cultural pattern of thinking which views any acknowledgment of wrongdoing as an act made under pressure and hence, inherently humiliating. She then put forth other meanings for apologizing and acknowledging one's own wrongdoing. She concluded:

It is clear that there is an emptiness in apology and acknowledgment of wrongdoing, which does include a decision about self-betterment and the struggle against the evil that gave birth to the wrongdoing. The person who acknowledges wrongdoing should know that he takes upon himself responsibility for opposing the potential return of the wrongdoing. To accomplish such a task, the person does not need to put on a "hair shirt," but has to eradicate everything that would enable the wrongdoing to come back. This internal evolution of cleansing, though sometimes difficult, is necessary not only on individual level, but also on social [collective] level. For the victim of the wrongdoing, this evolution can represent the best way of compensation.⁹⁷

Characteristically, the dramatic attempts of the defensive camp to portray the ceremony as an *anti-Polish* event—which had nothing to do with the historical truth about the massacre—led to the reinforcement of specific interpretations of the crime. In interview in the *Gazeta Współczesna*, Rev. Orłowski of Jedwabne insisted that the Germans killed the Jews in revenge for Jewish collaboration with the Soviet NKVD:

“the Jews would not have been killed if they did not collaborate with the NKVD.”⁹⁸ He stressed that it was the German Gestapo that was brought into Jedwabne on July 10, 1941 who killed the Jedwabne Jews by shooting and burning. One sees here a fusion of two primary themes in the defensive approach—that of German responsibility for the killing of Jedwabne Jews, and of Judeo-Communism as a rationalization and justification of the crime committed by their ethnic Polish neighbors.

The defensive camp bombarded Polish society with this dual message before, during, and after the official commemoration, creating much confusion about the historical truth of the events in Jedwabne. An August 2001 opinion poll conducted by CBOS showed that 28 percent of respondents held that only Germans/Nazis were responsible for the massacre of Jedwabne Jews, and 30 per cent were unable to say who was responsible. Only 8 per cent stated that Poles on their own were the direct perpetrators of the massacre.⁹⁹

Opinion polls conducted a month earlier by Pentor, revealed that among Poles aged between 15 and 25, the young generation is more open to a critical evaluation of Polish-Jewish relations and to accept the truth about the participation of ethnic Poles in the massacre. According to this poll, 23.3 percent of the respondents felt “satisfaction that the truth about the massacre of Jedwabne Jews was revealed and that the victims were honorably commemorated.” Furthermore, 68 percent of all respondents felt that the revelation of the participation of Poles in the Jedwabne murder was an important event.¹⁰⁰ Undoubtedly, this poll can be seen as a positive sign of the beginning of social and cultural changes occurring among youth in respect to the notion of Polish victimhood and the narrative of national history built on this notion. These changes may lead to a reshaping of the memory of Polish Jews in Poland and to increased normalization of Polish-Jewish relations in the future.

Following the commemoration, attempts at reviewing and evaluating the whole debate in the broader context of Polish-Jewish relations and Polish national tradition took place. The July issue of *ResPublica NOWA* published a discussion, “Pamięć i historia” (Memory and history), between the editor-in-chief, Marcin Król, and two other journal contributors, Paweł Spiewak and Marek Zaleski.¹⁰¹ All three took a sharply critical stance toward the way the debate had evolved and its impact on society. Pointing to the range of defensive approaches, they agreed that society in general, and particularly certain religious and intellectual elites were unable to undergo the “process of modernization” in their thinking. Furthermore, they argued that the ambiguous national heritage contained xenophobic and antisemitic aspects which continued

to have a strong hold on significant segments of society. The participants demonstrated their absolute commitment to pluralism, liberalism, and civic nationalism, aimed at eradicating all traces of xenophobic, antisemitic, and extreme ethno-nationalist attitudes and acts in society. Never before in twentieth-century Poland, had this position been expressed in such a mature and strong manner.

Another development that occurred in the summer of 2001 was the emergence of a more general discussion about the writing of national history. One such discussion in *Rzeczpospolita* took place between younger historians: Andrzej Nowak, editor of the bimonthly *Arcana*, and Paweł Machcewicz, director of the Public Education Office at IPN. Nowak, in his article, “Westerplatte czy Jedwabne” (Westerplatte or Jedwabne), argued that the way the IPN was dealing with the investigation into the Jedwabne massacre was arbitrary and unfair.¹⁰² He went on to attack the concept of writing critical history, which he compared to “writing a crime novel.” Moreover, he claimed that the main aim of critical history was not directed at presenting objective truth, but at “shaming those” being criticized and thus creating a “society of shame.” He claims this is just what happened at the commemoration of the Jedwabne massacre, and therefore the event should be evaluated in purely negative terms. Next, he contrasted the writing of critical history with the concept of scholarly history, not based on either pride or shame, but on seeking objective truth, which he failed to define. However, Nowak clearly showed the importance he attributes to the writing of a monumental national history as having an important positive role in society.

In response, Machcewicz defended the IPN and pointed out that the Jedwabne massacre and similar events had long been totally absent in historical writings and therefore need to be properly researched, and deserve an exclusive focus.¹⁰³ He also insisted that the commemoration at Jedwabne did not cause him shame, but on the contrary, made him proud that Poles had now faced one of the most difficult events of their past.

Nowak’s point of view, supported by Tomasz Merta, another historian who was director of the short-lived Institute of National Heritage, is an example of the sense of unease and reluctance of even younger historians to face Poland’s dark past.¹⁰⁴ Nowak’s position on writing history subscribes to the traditional model going back to the nineteenth century, wherein defending national honor and creating “a good feeling within the community to which the historian belongs” form the basis of conceptualization. Exposing shameful acts only serves to

tarnish the good name of the community, and is a symbolic form of destruction, undermining the communal sense of identity.

Such an understanding of shame and the writing of collective history is intellectually problematic. In the case of the Jedwabne massacre, it led, after all, to the falsification of the final chapter of the history of the Jewish community of the town, as well as distorting part of the social history of Poland in World War II. Despite these damaging consequences, professional historians taking the mildly defensive stance showed that the attachment to glorious moments in national history was intertwined with fear of exposing the darker side, which in their opinion threatened to eradicate the glory; there will always be a certain tension between the desire to foster pride in the community to which one belongs, and finding out uncomfortable truths about its history.

Perhaps the most intriguing illustration of this conflict in the debate was the case of historian Tomasz Szarota who had himself discussed some dark aspects of Polish-Jewish relations during World War II.¹⁰⁵ In his second major response to Gross, a long interview, “Jedwabne bez Stereotypów” (Jedwabne without stereotypes), published in *Tygodnik Powszechny* (April 2002), Szarota made quite a few controversial statements about *Neighbors* and its impact on society.¹⁰⁶ Szarota claimed that Gross’s book had simply reinforced the Polish inferiority complex, although his explanation for this conclusion was full of internal inconsistencies. Szarota claimed that Polish society at its present stage was not yet ready to accept the painful truth about the Jedwabne massacre. He suggested that in order to “face such truth, the community had to have a healthy and balanced awareness of its virtues and vices, a balanced awareness of its heroic past and also of its crimes.” In this, he failed to recognize that *Neighbors* could, in fact, be seen as a work contributing to the regaining of the “balanced awareness of virtues and vices.” The clue to his inconsistencies lay in the final section of the interview, in which he expressed hope that historical evidence would be found eventually to show that the Germans and not the Poles had executed the massacre. This shows the extent of the psychological need to see the Polish community as virtuous.

The IPN Investigation

A fourth stage in the debate ran from October 2001 through July 2002, although the discussion may continue well into the future. Compared to the previous stages, there was a relatively low level of intensity in the writings about *Neighbors* and the massacre.¹⁰⁷

At this time, the focus was increasingly on the activities of IPN, which had been conducting a very professional forensic investigation into the massacre. Members of the IPN team headed by Leon Kieres had refused to bend to the version of the crime presented in the strongly defensive camp, and thus came under attack in the nationalist press. These attacks intensified in the early winter of 2001, the final phase of the legal investigation into the massacre.

On December 19, 2001 Leon Kieres and Prof. Andrzej Rzepliński held a press conference at which they announced that the latest evidence appeared to confirm that the German troops had not been involved in the Jedwabne massacre. They produced forensic evidence proving beyond doubt that German bullets found during the brief exhumation of one of the Jewish graves in the early summer of 2001 were not of a type used by the Germans in 1941, but came from earlier and later periods.¹⁰⁸ The nationalist press had vigorously claimed that German bullets found in the grave proved Gross wrong, and now, the IPN announcement highlighted the problem of manipulating unconfirmed evidence on the part of the defensive camp.

The nationalist press condemned the IPN findings, and attacked its chairman, Leon Kieres. For his commitment to finding the objective truth and civic responsibility, as well as describing the Jews of Jedwabne as his compatriots, Kieres was described as the “Polish Quisling.”¹⁰⁹

Yet, the most severe attack on Kieres occurred at the February 27, 2002 session of the Polish parliament.¹¹⁰ Kieres delivered the report on the activities of the Institute of National Memory conducted between the summer of 2000 and the summer of 2001—the period of peak events with respect to the Jedwabne massacre. A group of MPs representing the League of Polish Families (*Liga Polskich Rodzin*, LPR), a newly-established Christian-Nationalist party which had won 7.87 seats in the parliamentary election of September 2001, launched a personal attack against Kieres.¹¹¹ He was called the “servant of the Jews,” and was blamed together with President Aleksander Kwaśniewski for “stoning the Polish nation.” Antoni Stryjewski of the LPR referred to the commemorative ceremony on July 10, 2001 as “chutzpa,” a term frequently found in the right-wing press since the summer of 2001. Furthermore, the MP Antoni Macierewicz, one of the leaders of the League, launched an official protest against the conclusion that ethnic Poles and not the Germans had executed the massacre. Clearly, the strong defensive position with clear antisemitic tones had penetrated a section of the mainstream political opposition to the current government.¹¹²

In the aftermath of the parliament session, the independent organization *Otwarta Rzeczpospolita* that fights antisemitism and xenophobia in Poland collected approximately 750 signatures on a petition protesting the “disgraceful behavior” of the League of Polish Families MPs.¹¹³

In early April, the American Polonia organization also circulated a letter of protest against Kieres, signed by twenty-four members of the cultural elite, including three historians—Marek J. Chodakiewicz, Kamil Dziewanowski, and Iwo C. Pogonowski.¹¹⁴

The IPN’s chief investigator, Radosław Ignatiew, issued the final report on the massacre on July 9, 2002.¹¹⁵ Among its findings was that the reported number of victims—1,600—had been overestimated. However, Gross’s main thesis, that ethnic Poles were responsible for the killings, was upheld.

The nationalist press again accused the IPN of spreading “the lies” found in Gross’s work and of orchestrating “a witch hunt against Poles” (*nagonka na Polaków*).¹¹⁶ Once again, the right-wing press called upon the controversial historians such as Bogdan Musiał, Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, and Richard Lukas to support its claim of Polish innocence. Moreover, Antoni Macierewicz, on behalf of the League of Polish Families issued a letter of protest against the final report.

The endorsement of Gross’s research by important segments of Poland’s political and cultural elite was a source of frustration for those in the defensive camp. Significantly, Gross’s findings were incorporated into a recently published high school history text.¹¹⁷

For those in the critical camp, the IPN report was simply a confirmation of the truth they had already realized about the Jedwabne massacre, thanks to Gross’s book.¹¹⁸ In an interview for Polish Radio 3, Aleksander Kwaśniewski stated that the report was a manifestation of Polish credibility.¹¹⁹ He stressed that the knowledge presented, although an unpleasant burden for the Poles, stands for historical truth and therefore should be respected. Other reactions to the report included reflections that contemplated the redressing of the crime and overcoming the difficult past history of Polish-Jewish relations. Piotr Pacewicz, writing in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, stated that the proper response to the IPN report should be an absolute condemnation and eradication of any traces of antisemitism in Polish society.¹²⁰ Przemysław Szubartowicz, the journalist of the left-wing *Trybuna*, voiced a similar opinion. In his article “Ciężar zbrodni” (The weight of the crime) he stated that “the crime cannot be thrown out in the ‘garbage of history,’ but has to be continuously recollected as a warning for the future.”¹²¹

The only criticism of the IPN's report that came from the critical camp was that of Ludwik Stomma, the well-known journalist of *Polityka*.¹²² In the article "Niedoróbka" (A bad unfinished job), Stomma questioned the IPN's estimated figures of the murdered Jews and Polish perpetrators, and the more general interpretation of the crime as "committed directly by Poles, but inspired by the Germans." In his opinion, the latter fails to deliver a clear message because it was formulated in order to please right-wing political circles. Thus, the only reliable answers about the massacre can be found in scholarly analysis and not in a forensic investigation.

Perhaps a clearer and fuller picture of the dynamics of the massacre and its postwar history can be made in the light of the forthcoming publication *Wokół Jedwabnego* (Around Jedwabne), being prepared by IPN's educational department.¹²³ The book, popularly known as *Biała Księga o Jedwabnem* (The white book of Jedwabne), consists of two volumes. The first volume contains eight articles, including analyses of various aspects of the history of the Jewish community and Polish-Jewish relations in Jedwabne in the prewar and wartime periods, and of the early postwar court proceeding against ethnic Polish perpetrators of the massacres of Jews in Jedwabne and surrounding area. The second volume contains 440 documents from various Polish, Russian, and German archives. The second volume, which numbers around 1000 pages, will no doubt constitute an important collection of primary data for further studies of the Jedwabne massacre and Polish-Jewish relations in the region.

Conclusion

The national debate about *Neighbors* and the Jedwabne massacre can be seen as a reflection of the process of democratization of Poland's political and social life after 1989. Moreover, it reflects the increasing importance of the critical approach toward the previous biased representation of Polish-Jewish relations and toward the collective self-image of Poles as victims. The critical approach was endorsed by segments of the mainstream political and cultural elite, as well as others, particularly in the younger generation. The investigation into the massacre by the IPN, and the sixtieth anniversary commemoration show beyond doubt that an important part of Polish elites is capable of coming to terms with the country's dark past. In turn, this reveals the possibility for further normalization of Polish-Jewish relations, and wider acceptance of a more balanced and truthful collective self-image, in which the elements of the shameful past in relation to the Jewish

minority and other groups can be fully integrated. Jan Tomasz Gross and others taking the critical approach in the debate about *Neighbors* should be given credit for the sparking the emergence of these important cultural and social developments.

At the same time, the rejection of the truth about the massacre by the nationalist and conservative political elites, the representatives of the Closed Church and their supporters among the non-elite, indicates that the defensive approach is not a phenomenon belonging to the past, but is still part of the patterns of thinking about the past. Perhaps the most disturbing and disappointing aspect of the debate was the advocacy of the strongly defensive approach by respectable professional historians like Tomasz Strzembosz.

Although it is impossible to make long-range historical predictions about the future of the defensive approach, one cannot simply dismiss it as a marginal phenomenon. Perhaps the best example of the negative results of the defensive stance can be seen in the angry reaction of the majority of Jedwabne's own citizens at the time *Neighbors* was published and during the ensuing debate. Still, one hopes that as Poland's educational system develops more programs committed to teaching about democracy, pluralism, and civic nationalism, the impact of the defensive approach will be lessened among the younger generation. It may be, however, that further public debate about the collective past will be needed in order to realize that goal.

Notes

- ¹ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1980), 83-84.
- ² On the importance of political culture and self-criticism in reckoning with the past, see Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1994).
- ³ For the interpretation of a public debate as testimony to the development of a pluralistic society see, e.g., Siobhan Kattago, *Ambiguous Memory. The Nazi Past and German National Identity* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001), 169-72. On collective memory as a subject open to contestation in liberal pluralistic societies see Michael Schudson, "Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory," in *Memory and Memory Distortion*, edited by D. Schachter (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), 360-61.
- ⁴ Other aspects include anti-Jewish sentiment and beliefs voiced publicly in Nazi-occupied Poland and anti-Jewish acts by individuals or specific right-wing military units of the Polish underground forces; see Joanna Michlic-Coren, "The Troubling Past: The Polish Collective Memory of the Holocaust," *East European Jewish Affairs* 29, nos. 1-2 (1999): 75-84.
- ⁵ Massacres of the Jewish population by ethnic Poles took place in Radziłów and Wąsosz at the beginning of July 1941 as well. Other places where ethnic Poles were involved in killings of the Jewish communities are Goniądz, Kolno, Knyszyn, Stawiska, Szczuczyn, and Suchowola. Information about these latter crimes first appeared in Szymon Datner "Eksterminacja Żydów Okręgu Białostockiego" *Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 60 (Oct.-Dec. 1966): 1-29. Datner referred to these cases as massacres conducted by the local population (*miejscowa ludność*), and not explicitly by ethnic Poles. The terminology was undoubtedly dictated by communist censorship.
- ⁶ The notion of Poland as an equal participant of the Nazi plan and genocide of European Jews can be found in some popular Jewish representations of the past. Most of the authors who disseminated this version either had first-hand experience of violent Polish antisemitism during the war, or family members who suffered from it. All serious scholars of the Holocaust reject this and differentiate between the German and Polish dark pasts.
- ⁷ In various sociological analyses, anti-minority beliefs are considered as one of many elements to explain violence. For sociological approaches to inter-ethnic violence, see Michael Brown, "Cause and Implications of Ethnic Conflict," in *The Ethnicity Reader*, edited by Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 1997), 80-99.
- ⁸ The Polish dark past encompasses various aspects, including the collaboration of ethnic Poles with Soviet and communist authorities during the Second World War and postwar communist era, and Polish-Ukrainian relations of the early postwar period. The

problem of the dark past in relation to the Ukrainian minority has now begun to be openly discussed. See, e.g., *Więź* 4 (April 2002), special issue, entitled *Z Ukraińcami po Jedwabnem*.

⁹ The early postwar period was the first stage of reckoning with the dark past. Between 1945 and 1947, a distinguished group of Polish intellectuals, including Jerzy Andrzejewski, Kazimierz Wyka, and Witold Kula, engaged in a critical discussion of the problem of blackmailers of Jews, social indifference toward the genocide of Polish Jewry, and wartime anti-Jewish sentiments. Joanna Michlic, "The Holocaust and Its Aftermath as Perceived in Poland: Voices of Polish Intellectuals, 1945-47," in *The Return of Jews to Europe*, edited by David Bankier (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003) (forthcoming).

¹⁰ See the file of Antonina and Aleksander Wyrzykowscy, Yad Vashem Archives, Group Record M. 31–1011. On the social disapproval of Wyrzykowscy in their own community after the war, see the documentary film by Agnieszka Arnold *Sąsiedzi* (2001, TVP, POLAND).

¹¹ Szmuel Wasersztajn testified on 5 April 1945 before the Jewish Historical Commission in Białystok, later, his testimony was deposited in the archives of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, where Jan Tomasz Gross discovered it.

¹² On the development of memory of the Holocaust in communist Poland, see Michael C. Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead. Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 43-75.

¹³ See Steinlauf, *Bondage*, 76-88. On the memory of Jews in the 1980s in Poland, see Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Neutralizing Memory. The Jew in Contemporary Poland* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transactions, 1989).

¹⁴ Antony Polonsky, "Polish-Jewish Relations and the Holocaust," *Polin* 4 (1989): 231.

¹⁵ Jan Błoński, "The Poor Poles Look At The Ghetto," *Polin* 2 (1987): 321-336.

¹⁶ See Antony Polonsky, "Introduction," in *My Brother's Keeper?* *Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust*, edited by idem (London: Routledge, 1990), 13-16.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Maria Janion, *Do Europy tak, ale razem z naszymi umarłymi* (Warsaw: Sic!, 2000); idem, "Spór o antysemityzm," *Tygodnik Powszechny—Magazyn Kontrapunkt*, 22 October 2000, 9-12; Stanisław Musiał, "Żydzi Żądni Krwi," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 29-30 July 2000, 22; idem, "Droga krzyżowa Żydów Sandomierskich," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 5-6 August 2000, 21-22; idem, "Czarne jest czarne," *Tygodnik Powszechny—Magazyn Kontrapunkt*, 22 October 2000, 12; Hanna Świda-Ziemia, "Rozbrajać własne mity," *Znak*, no. 6 (June 2000): 49-54.

¹⁸ See Joanna Michlic, "The Troubling Past: Polish Collective Memory of the Holocaust. An Overview," *East European Jewish Affairs* 29, nos. 1-2 (1999): 77-79.

¹⁹ See Jan Tomasz Gross, *Polish Society Under German Occupation: The Generalgouvernement, 1939-1944* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979); idem, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1988); Irena Grudzinska-Gross and idem, eds., *War*

through Children's Eyes: The Soviet Occupation of Poland and the Deportations, 1939-1941 (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Hoover Archival Documentaries, 1981); idem, István Déak and Tony Judt, eds. *The Politics of Retribution in Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

²⁰ Jan Tomasz Gross, *Upiorna Dekada* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Universitas, 1998).

²¹ Participants in the debate entitled “Polacy i Żydzi w upiornej Dekadzie” were Włodzimierz Borodziej, Helena Datner, Andrzej Friszke, Dariusz Stola, Jacek Borkowicz, Agnieszka Magdziak-Miszewska, and Wojciech Wiczorek, see *Więź*, no. 7 (1999): 4-22 (hereafter, “Polacy”).

²² See “Polacy,” 20.

²³ Jan Tomasz Gross, *Sąsiedzi. Historia Zagłady Żydowskiego Miasteczka* (Sejny: Fundacja Pogranicze, 2000).

²⁴ Swida-Ziemia, “Rozbrajać,” 48.

²⁵ Julius L. Baker and Jacob L. Baker, eds., *The Jedwabne Book, History and Remembrance* (Jerusalem and New York: Jedwabner Societies in Israel and the United States of America, 1980). Information about the Jedwabne memorial book is also available at <http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/jedwabne/yed999.html>

²⁶ On the impact of the massacre on its survivors and their children, see Anna Bikont, “Ja, Szmul Wasersztajn, ostrzegam,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 12 July 2002.

²⁷ Jan Tomasz Gross, *Neighbors. The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne Poland* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001) 169.

²⁸ I am indebted to Prof. Barry Schwartz for discussing with me the issue of different interpretations of the same story/event in various national communities.

²⁹ For short summaries in Polish on the German debate about Jedwabne, see Joachim Trenkner, “Co komu przystoi,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* no. 49 (2001) <http://www.tygodnik.com.pl/numer/2749/trenkner.html> ; Joanna Wiorkiewicz, “Jedwabne widziane zza Odry,” *Więź*, no. 1, January 2002, http://www.pogranicze.sejny.pl/jedwabne/wiez/1_02.html. For excerpts from the German press (in Polish), “O książce Grossa w Niemczech,” *Sprawy polskie w prasie zagranicznej*. Polska Agencja Informacyjna, <http://www.pai.pl/media/tydzien/gross.html>

³⁰ See Shimon Redlich, “What happened one day in Jedwabne,” *Haaretz*, 8 December 2000, B9. The concern over the potential reinforcement, in certain Jewish circles, of the stereotype of Poles as Nazis in the light of the “discovery” of the real perpetrators of the Jedwabne massacre was also raised by Laurence Weinbaum, *The Struggle for Memory in Poland. Auschwitz, Jedwabne and Beyond* (Jerusalem: Institute of the World Jewish Congress, 2001), 35.

³¹ See, e.g., a local American reaction: C. Cary Lindsay, “Neighborly Love,” posted on http://www.pbirla.com/lindsay_072401.html

³² See John Reed, “Poland’s Willing Executioners?” *Financial Times*, 10 February 2001, 6.

- ³³ Dorota Krawczyńska, “Prawdy ukryte na powierzchni” *ResPublika Nowa*, no. 1 (2001), <http://respublica.onet.pl/3264.recenzja.html>.
- ³⁴ See, e.g., Aleksander Kwaśniewski, “Polska szlachetność i polska hańba. Z prezydentem Aleksandrem Kwaśniewskim rozmawiają ks. Adam Boniecki i Krzysztof Burnetko,” *Tygodnik Powszechny*, no. 1 (15 April 2001): 8-9; idem, “Co to znaczy przepraszam,” *Polityka*, no. 28 (14 July 2001): 13.
- ³⁵ The division into critical and defensive approaches is reflected in the first typology of the positions toward the Jedwabne massacre. See Andrzej Paczkowski, “Debata wokół ‘Sąsiadów: próba wstępnej typologii,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 24 March 2001, A6.
- ³⁶ See Andrzej Kaczyński, “Calopalenie,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 May 2000, A2-A3. The English translation was placed on the website of Morlan Ty Rogers, whose 27 relatives were murdered in the Jedwabne massacre; idem, interview with historian Adam Dobroński of the University of Białystok, “Kontrowersje historyczne weryfikują się w dialogu,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 May 2000, A3; on the false inscription on the monument to Jedwabne’s Jews, idem, “Oczyszczanie pamięci,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 19 May 2000, A2.
- ³⁷ Gross published the testimony of Szmuel Wasersztajn in a festschrift dedicated to Tomasz Strzembosz: Jan Tomasz Gross, “Lato 1941 w Jedwabnem. Przyczynek do badań nad udziałem społeczności lokalnych w eksterminacji narodu żydowskiego w latach II wojny światowej,” in *Europa nieproningjonalna*, edited by Krzysztof Jasiewicz (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza Rytm, 2000), 1098-1103 (hereafter, Gross, “Lato.”
- ³⁸ Some of these articles appeared in English in 2001 in a special issue of *Więź* entitled, *Thou Shalt Not Kill. Poles on Jedwabne*, edited by William Brand (hereafter, Brand, *Thou Shalt Not Kill*). In that volume, see, e.g., Gabriela Szczęsna, “The Blood of Jedwabne,” 41-45 (“Krew Jedwabnego,” originally published in *Kontakty*, 7 May 2000); Maria Kaczyńska, “Burn the Jews in the Barn,” 53-57 (“Żydzi spaleni w stodole,” originally published in *Gazeta Współczesna*, 14 July 2000), and Adam Willma, “My Son’s Beard,” 58-64 (“Broda mojego syna,” originally published in *Gazeta Pomorska*, 4 August 2000). See also Jarosław Lipszyc, “Sąsiedzi i ich wnuki,” *Midrasz*, no. 6 (June 2000): 41-44.
- ³⁹ See Andrzej Paczkowski, “Co zrobić z komunistyczną przeszłością?—Przykład Polski,” *Zeszyty Historyczne* (Paris), 139 (2002): 13.
- ⁴⁰ Jacek Żakowski, “Každy sąsiad ma imię,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18-19 November 2000, 12-14; and Tomasz Szarota, “Diabelskie szczegóły. Rozmawia z Prof. Tomaszem Szarota Jacek Żakowski,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18-19 November 2000, 10-12 (hereafter, Szarota, “Diabelskie szczegóły”).
- ⁴¹ Szarota, “Diabelskie szczegóły,” in *Thou Shall Not Kill*, 68.
- ⁴² Jan Tomasz Gross, “Mord zrozumiały?” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 25-26 November 2000, 14-15.
- ⁴³ See Dariusz Czaja, “To nie ‘oni’ niestety,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 16-17 December 2000, 21-22; Jacek Kurczewski, “Mord Rytualny,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 10 December 2000, 36-37; Krystyna Skarżyńska, “Zbiorowa wyobraźnia, wspólna wina,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 25-26 November 2000; Dawid Warszawski, “Odpowiedzialność i jej brak,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*,

9-10 December 2000, 20-21; idem, "Trupi uścisk," *Wprost*, 15 July 2001, 24; idem, "Mowa pokutna. Bez także," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9 March 2001, 18; idem, "Dwie Polski w Jedwabnem," *Wprost*, 21 July 2002, 24-26 (Hereafter, Warszawski, "Dwie Polski")

⁴⁴ Skarżyńska, "Zbiorowa wyobraźnia," 22.

⁴⁵ See Halina Bortnowska "Gdy sąsiad nie ma imienia," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27-28 January 2001, 24; and Wojciech Sadurski, "Duma, wstyd i Jedwabne," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 3-4 March 2001, 22; Hanna Świda-Ziemia, "Krótkowzroczność 'kulturalnych,'" *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 7-8 April 2001, 18-19.

⁴⁶ See Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, "Nasz człowiek w Pieczarach. Jedwabne: pamięć nieodzyskana," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, no. 13, 31 March 2002, 1, 4; idem, "Pulapki wczesnego przebaczenia," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 11 August 2001.

⁴⁷ Halina Bortnowska, "Psalm dla pielgrzymów do Jedwabnego," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 2-3 June 2001, 23.

⁴⁸ Jarosław Gowin, "Naród-ostatni węzeł," *Rzeczpospolita*, 18 January 2001, A6.

⁴⁹ Stefan Wilkanowicz, "A Few Reflections on Responsibility and Patriotism," in *Thou Shalt Not Kill*, 231; original Polish version, "Kilka Refleksji o odpowiedzialności i patriotyzmie," *Znak* (February 2001).

⁵⁰ Tomasz Strzembosz, "Przemilczana kolaboracja," *Rzeczpospolita*, 27-28 January 2001, A6-A7. This article was a critical response to the positive review of *Neighbors* by historian Andrzej Żbikowski of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, who had argued that the accusation of Jewish collaboration with the Soviet regime was commonly manipulated in order to initiate anti-Jewish massacres. Andrzej Żbikowski, "Nie było rozkazu" (An order was not given), *Rzeczpospolita*, 4 January 2001, A6-A7.

⁵¹ Strzembosz, "Przemilczana kolaboracja," A6.

⁵² Idem, "Inny obraz sąsiadów," *Rzeczpospolita*, 31 March–1 April 2001, A6-A7.

⁵³ See, e.g., Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "Kłopoty z kuracją szokową," *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 January 2001, A6; Bogdan Musiał, "Historiografia mityczna," *Rzeczpospolita*, 24-25 February 2001, A6; Piotr Gontarczyk, "Gross kontra fakty," *Zycie*, 31 January 2001, 4; and Leszek Żebrowski, "Jedwabnym szlakiem kłamstw," http://www.geocities.com/jedwabne/english/wywiad_z_leszkiem_zebrowskim_2.htm

⁵⁴ See, e.g., Lech Stępniewski, "Krew ich na nas i na dzieci nasze..." *Najwyższy Czas*, 12 March 2001; idem, "Cud Purymony i inne historie," *Najwyższy Czas*, 14 March 2001; idem, "Prolegomena do matematyki narodowej," *Najwyższy Czas*, 25-26 April 2001; idem, "O kanalizacji," *Najwyższy Czas*, 29-30 April, 2001.

⁵⁵ Jan Tomasz Gross, "Podtrzymuję swoje tezy," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 3 April 2001, 16-17.

⁵⁶ The study of support by Jews and other ethnic groups in eastern Poland for the Soviet regime still awaits in-depth scholarly analysis. However, "Judeo-communism" as used by historians like Strzembosz, Chodakiewicz, and others is primarily a reflection of their prejudice toward Jews, and their writings do not constitute an objective historical analysis. See Feliks Tych, "Preface," in *Archiwum Ringelbluma. Relacje z Kresów*, edited by Andrzej Żbikowski (Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny IN-B, 2000), 3:5-8.

⁵⁷ See Jacek Kurczewski, "Dialog ekumeniczny," *Wprost*, 11 February 2001, 36; Zofia Borzumińska and Rafał Żebrowski, "Nieuprawniona symetria," *Rzeczpospolita*, 7 April 2001, A4-A6.

⁵⁸ Israel Gutman, "Introduction" in *Thou Shalt Not Kill*, 14.

⁵⁹ Tomasz Strzembosz, "Panu Prof. Gutmanowi do sztambucha," *Więź*, June 2001, 92-97; Israel Gutman, "Oni i my. W odpowiedzi Prof. Tomasza Strzembosza," *Więź*, August 2001, 130-138.

⁶⁰ Jerzy Robert Nowak, "Jak żydowscy sąsiedzi tępiłi katolików," *Tygodnik Głos*, 24 March 2001, 6.

⁶¹ Kwaśniewski's interview for *Yediot Abaronot* was widely reported in the Polish press, and was followed by similar statements in the Polish mass media, including an interview for Polish Television on 5 March 2001 (reported by Mikołaj Lizut, "Jak przeprosić za Jedwabne," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 6 March 2001, 1). Kwaśniewski's statements were placed on the website of the Christian National movement as examples of his betrayal of the Polish nation: <http://www.rkn.org.pl/top.html>

⁶² Janusz Korwin-Mikke, founder and head of the extreme Right Unia Polityki Realnej (Real Politics Union) stated that if Kwaśniewski dared to apologize for the Jedwabne massacre, he should be charged in court with the betrayal of the Polish nation. Jan Korwin-Mikke, "Przepraszactwo," *Angora*, no. 12 (2001), http://www.angora.com.pl/teksty/mikke/skeleton.ihtml?file=_12-01 ; idem, "Odpowiedzialność zbiorowa," *Angora*, no. 13 (2001), http://www.angora.com.pl/teksty/mikke/skeleton.ihtml?file=_13-01.

⁶³ See <http://www.rkn.org.pl/top.html>

⁶⁴ Unia Wolności's position led the party to be labelled "Jewish," a strategy used against the party since its founding. See Zbigniew Lipiński, "Jedwabne podnosi głowę," *Mysł Polska*, no. 15 (2001), http://pogranicze.sejny.pl/jedwabne/myslpol/nr15_1.html

⁶⁵ Jacek Kuroń, "Nienawiść do ofiary," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17-18 February 2001, 23; Waldemar Kuczyński, "Płonąca Stodoła i ja," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 24-25 March 2001, 21.

⁶⁶ The other coauthors of the appeal to participate were Rev. Michał Czajkowski and the well-known courier of the underground Polish state, Jan Nowak-Jezioranski. The appeal was published in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, no. 16 (22 April 2001): 5.

⁶⁷ See Bronisław Geremek, "Dajmy znak. List lidera UW do prezydenta," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 16 March 2001, 4.

⁶⁸ See Zarząd Krajowy, "Dziedziczymy nie tylko chwałę. List otwarty do członków i sympatyków SLD," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 16 March 2001, 4.

⁶⁹ For a broader analysis of the attitudes toward Jews, see Joanna Michlic, "The 'Open Church' and the 'Closed Church' and the Discourse On Jews In Poland Between 1989 and 2000," in *The Jews and Antisemitism In Public Discourse in Post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by Leon Volovici (Jerusalem, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, forthcoming).

⁷⁰ See Józef Glemp, "Wina uznana sprawiedliwie," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 6 March 2001, 4.

⁷¹ For a critical discussion of Glemp's position, see Roman Graczyk, "Zabrakło prorocstwa," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9-10 June 2001, 24-25 and Witold Nawrocki, "Prawda, wstyd i odpowiedzialność," *Dzisiaj-przegląd społeczny*, no. 7, 2001, 21-28.

⁷² See Stanisław Stefanek, "Moralny obowiązek dochodzenia do prawdy," *Nasz Dziennik*, 13 March 2001, 4-5. Bishop Józef Michalik, in his editorial column "Minał Tydzień" of the important Catholic weekly *Niedziela*, frequently presented a position similar to that of Bishop Stefanek; see Józef Michalik, "Piromani 'Wyborczej'," *Niedziela*, 24 June 2001, http://www.geocities.com/jedwabne/piromani_z_wyborczej.htm

⁷³ Jankowski prepared similar Easter decorations with anti-Jewish messages on previous occasions. See Michlic, "The 'Open Church.'"

⁷⁴ Rev. Wojciech Lemański also wrote about his decision about making a reference to the Jedwabne massacre in the Easter decorations in his parish. Wojciech Lemański, "Chrystus w zgłiszczach stodoly," published in *Więź* (June 2001): 78-85. For comments on Lemański's "Grave," see Michał Okoński, "Ścieżka przez getto," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 20 May 2001, 2.

⁷⁵ These papers serve as the main forum of the Open Church position. See, e.g., Rev. Michał Czajkowski, "Czysta Nierządnicza. Dlaczego należy przeproszać za Jedwabne," *Tygodnik Powszechny* 21 (27 May 2001): 1, 5; Rev. Adam Boniecki (editor-in-chief of *Tygodnik Powszechny*), "Bronię księdza Michała," *Tygodnik Powszechny* 21 (27 May 2001): 4, and other editorials of his.

⁷⁶ Józef Życiński, "The Banalisation of Barbarity," in *Thou Shalt Not Kill*, 257.

⁷⁷ Bishop Henryk Muszyński, "Biedny chrześcijanin patrzy na Jedwabne," *Tygodnik Powszechny, Kontrapunkt*, no. 1/2, 25 March 2001, 13.

⁷⁸ Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek, "Prawda Jedwabnego," *Wprost*, 13 May 2001, 8.

⁷⁹ See, e.g., a small collection of non-elite voices: "Nasza wina," *Wprost*, 8 April 2001, 40-41.

⁸⁰ Władysław Bartoszewski, "Zło w dobro obrócić," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 10 April 2001, 8 (Polish translation of his speech at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C., on April 5, 2001).

⁸¹ The right-wing nationalist press has labeled the film a false and manipulative presentation of the Jedwabne community. See Leszek Żebrowski, "Pytania o Jedwabne," part 3, *Nasz Dziennik*, 10 July 2002, 11.

⁸² Tadeusz Słobodzianek, "Historia się skończyła..." *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 28 September 2001, <http://www.gazeta.pl/alfa/artukul.jsp?xx=454436&dzial=0201052103>

⁸³ Robert Winnicki, "Dobre imię Jedwabnego," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 6 March 2001, 4.

⁸⁴ Robert Winnicki and Mikołaj Lizut, "Jedwabianie chcą zapomnieć," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 12 March 2001, 4.

⁸⁵ On the reactions of the Jedwabne community, see Anna Bikont, "My z Jedwabnego," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 23 March 2001, 10-15; idem, "Proszę tu więcej nie przychodzić," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 31 March-1 April, 2001, 10-12; and idem, "Mieli wódke,

broń i nienawiść,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 June 2001, 10-14; Jerzy Sławomir Mac, “Upiory Jedwabnego,” *Wprost*, 28 January 2001, 26-29; idem, “Homo jedwabicus,” *Wprost*, 22 July 2001, 25-27; Zbigniew Krzywicki, “Jedwabne nie do wierza,” *Trybuna*, 20/21 April 2002, 3; and Adam Willma, “Przez zwykłego psa,” *Gazeta Pomorska*, 19 July 2002, 9.

⁸⁶ Rev. Michał Czajkowski, “Czysta Nierządnicza,” *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 27 May 2001, 1.

⁸⁷ For a positive evaluation of the mass see, e.g., Jan Turnau, “Głos biskupów jasny i mocny,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9-10 June 2001, 25. For a negative evaluation of the Church’s general position, see Roman Graczyk, “Zabrakło,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9-10 June 2001; Mikołaj Lizut, “Skrucha za Jedwabne,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 28 May 2001, 1.

⁸⁸ Stanisław Gądecki, “Oby nigdy nie powtórzyło się Jedwabne,” *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 3 June 2001, 2.

⁸⁹ See Jerzy Robert Nowak, *100 kłamstw J. T. Grossa o żydowskich sąsiadach w Jedwabnem* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo von Borowiecki, 2001); Henryk Pajak, *Jedwabne geszeftły*, (Lublin: Wydawnictwo Retro, 2001); Lech Z. Niekrasz, *Operacja Jedwabne—mity i fakty* (Wrocław: Nortom, 2001).

⁹⁰ The battle for Westerplatte is viewed as one of the most heroic battles of the September 1939 Polish defensive war against the German invaders.

⁹¹ See “ROP nie przeprosza za Jedwabne,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 10 July 2001, 2; and a similar statement by the Conservative Club in Łódź (Klub Konserwatywny w Łodzi), *Tygodnik Głos*, 7 July 2001, 2-4.

⁹² See Mac, “Homo” 27.

⁹³ See, e.g., the special issue of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 11 July 2001, 1-5; and “Kadisz w Jedwabnem,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 11 July 2001, A1, A5.

⁹⁴ Bishop Stanisław Stefanek, “Odebrać Polakom dobre imię,” *Nasz Dziennik*, 13 July 2001, 2.

⁹⁵ Aleksander Kwaśniewski’s speech, “Sąsiedzi sąsiadom zgotowali ten los,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 11 July 2001, 4.

⁹⁶ Aleksander Kwaśniewski, “Co to znaczy przeproszam,” *Polityka* 28 (14 July 2001): 13.

⁹⁷ Barbara Skarga, “Wyznanie,” *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 28 April 2002, 9.

⁹⁸ Interview with Rev. Edward Orłowski, *Gazeta Współczesna*, 17 July 2001.

⁹⁹ Anon., *Polacy Wobec Zbrodni w Jedwabnem—Przemiany Społecznej Świadomości* (Warsaw: CBOS, September 2001). I would like to thank Prof. Andrzej Paczkowski of the Institute of Political Studies in Warsaw for giving me a copy of the report.

¹⁰⁰ Pentor’s opinion poll was published in *Wprost*, 22 July 2001, 26.

¹⁰¹ See the editorial conversation, “Pamięć i Historia,” *ResPublica Nova* 7 (July 2001), <http://respublica.onet.pl/1057150,artykul.html>

¹⁰² Andrzej Nowak, “Westerplatte czy Jedwabne,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 1 August 2001, A4-A6.

¹⁰³ Paweł Machcewicz, “I Westerplatte, o Jedwabne,” *Rzeczpospolita*, 9 August 2001, A4-A5.

¹⁰⁴ Tomasz Merta, "Warunek obrachunku z przeszłością," *Rzeczpospolita*, 1 September 2001, <http://arch.rp.pl/a/rz//2001/09/20010901124.htm>

¹⁰⁵ See Tomasz Szarota, *U progu zmaglady. Zajścia antyżydowskie i pogromy w okupowanej Europie* (Warsaw: Sic!, 2000).

¹⁰⁶ Tomasz Szarota, "Jedwabne bez stereotypów," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 28 April 2002, 1, 8; a response: Jan Tomasz Gross, "Trochę szkoda, że "nie pisze się historii, chodząc po barach..." *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 5 May 2002, 5. Szarota's final response in "this small debate" did not differ from the April 28 interview with him. See Tomasz Szarota, "Zmarnowana szansa," *Tygodnik Powszechny*, 12 May 2002, 5.

¹⁰⁷ See, e.g., articles in the section "On Jedwabne, Gross's *Neighbors* and the Debate on Poles's National Identity" in the special issue of *Polish Sociological Review*, no. 1 (2002): 71-136; Skarga, *Wyżnanie*, and Andrzej Mencwel, "Antysemityzm bez Żydów," part 1, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14 June 2002; part 2, 21 June 2002; <http://wyborcza.gazeta.pl/info/artykul.jsp?xx=879078&dzial=011102>

¹⁰⁸ See BBC News, "New Evidence on Polish Massacre," 19 December 2001.

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., Witold Starnawski, "Jak IPN chroni narodową pamięć," *Tygodnik Głos*, 26 January 2002, <http://www.gloscom.pl/archiwum/2002/004/06publ/publ.htm> ; in an interview for *Dziennik Bałtycki*, 15 June 2001, Kieres said "I treat 'Polishness' as a civic category and thus treat Jews of Jedwabne as my co-patriots." Cited in *Polityka*, 30 June 2001, 88.

¹¹⁰ For an anti-Kieres report, see Maciej Walaszczyk, "Kieres w narożniku," *Nasz Dziennik*, 1 March 2002, <http://www.naszdziennik.pl/stcodz/polska/20020301/po32.shtml> One of the first attacks against Kieres took place in June 2001. Andrzej Reymann, editor-in-chief of the bi-monthly *Najjaśniejsza Rzeczpospolita*, asked Leon Kaczyński, the chief prosecutor of Poland to begin an investigation of Leon Kieres and Radosław Ignatiew; see Iwona Boratyń, "Prokurator Tuszował?" *Słowo Ludu*, 17 May 2002, 2.

¹¹¹ The League of Polish Families, a Catholic nationalist party, is currently the strongest radical Right party in Poland, similar to France's Front Nationale. It was formed just before the 2001 general election, in which it won 7.87 per cent of vote, giving it 38 deputies in the parliament and two in the Senate House. Its spiritual authority is Father Tadeusz Rydzyk of Radio Maryja. The Party opposes Poland's entry into the EU and uses nationalist, xenophobic, and antisemitic rhetoric.

¹¹² The government coalition was formed with the previous main opposition party, Social Left Alliance (SLD), led by Leszek Miller, and the non-communist socialist Union of Labour (Unia Pracy), led by Marek Pol. The coalition won 41.04 percent of the seats in parliament.

¹¹³ See Aleksander Malachowski, "Wielkość Leona Kieresa," *Przegląd*, 11 March 2002, 78, which praises Kieres.

¹¹⁴ For the full text of the letter, see *Nasz Dziennik*, 12 July 2002. <http://www.naszdziennik.pl/stcodz/polska/20020712/po02.shtml> The letter was originally published by *Nasz Dziennik* on 9 April 2002, 3. Another accusatory letter,

signed by Jan Moor-Jankowski, the Polish-American forensic expert, was published in *Nasze Dziennik* on 17 April 2002, 3.

¹¹⁵ Historians dispute the number of Jews who lived in Jedwabne on the eve of 1939, and the number of Jews murdered on July 10, 1941. According to some estimates, 1,600 Jews lived in Jedwabne on the eve of the war; other estimates give figures of 1,200 and 1,000 respectively. In the early postwar period survivors of the massacre cited figures of 1,200 and 1,600 Jews respectively; see Gross, "Lato," 1099. During the debate, those in the defensive camp tended to reduce the figure of murdered Jews significantly. In the early summer of 2001, after the partial exhumation of one of the Jewish graves in Jedwabne, the defensive camp claimed a figure of 200 individuals. Figures cited later in the discussion varied between 600 and 1000. The IPN report indicates the objective difficulty of establishing a precise number of those murdered—an accurate figure might not be possible more than sixty 60 years after the date of the crime. One fact remains clear: except for a few individuals, the entire Jewish community of Jedwabne perished on July 10, 1941.

¹¹⁶ Stanisław Zawadzki, "Nagonka na Polaków," *Nasze Dziennik*, 11 July 2002. <http://www.naszdziennik.pl/stcodz/polska/20020712/po02.shtml>; see also Jacek Zieliński, "Jedwabne: wątpliwości pozostały," http://www.polskiejutro.com/art/a.php?p=11moim_zdaniem. *Polskiejutro.com* exists only as an internet newspaper.

¹¹⁷ The history textbook under attack is T. Małkowski and J. Rzeźniowski, *Historia III. Podręcznik do gimnazjum*, part 2 (Gdańsk, 2002). See Leszek Żebrowski, "Pytania o Jedwabne," part 3, *Nasze Dziennik*, 10 July 2002, <http://www.naszdziennik.pl/stcodz/polska/20020710/my11.shtml>; For a good example of frustration, see "Ustalenia IPN to fuszerka. Rozmowa z prof. Jerzym R. Nowakiem," *Nasze Dziennik*, 12 July 2002, <http://www.naszdziennik.pl/stcodz/polska/20020712/po02.shtml>

¹¹⁸ See Warszawski, "Dwie Polski," 24-26.

¹¹⁹ Excerpts of the interview with President Kwaśniewski, "Kwaśniewski: zakończenie śledztwa pokazuje polską wiarygodność," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 10 July 2002. <http://wyborcza.gazeta.pl/info/artykul.jsp?xx=925804&dzial=01010101>

¹²⁰ Piotr Pacewicz, "Rachunek sumienia," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9 July 2002. <http://wyborcza.gazeta.pl/info/artykul.jsp?xx=924466&dzial=01010101>

¹²¹ Przemysław Szubartowicz, "Ciężar zbrodni," *Trybuna*, 13-14 July 2002, 2.

¹²² Ludwik Stomma, "Niedoróbka," *Polityka*, no. 31, 3 August 2002, 90.

¹²³ Paweł Machcewicz and Krzysztof Persak, eds., *Wokół Jedwabnego*, 2 vols., (Warsaw: IPN, 2002). I would like to thank Krzysztof Persak for providing me with detailed information about the publication. For a comprehensive analysis of the debate about Jedwabne, see Antony Polonsky and Joanna Michlic, *Neighbors: The Discussion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, forthcoming 2003).