

Free analyzing jan gross' neighbors report sample

[Law](#), [Evidence](#)



The Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland is a publication by Jan Tomasz Gross in the year 2000. The book analyzes the events in the small town of Jedwabne around 1939. This was during the time when the Germans occupied Poland. The book looks at the manner in which the Polish non-Jewish inhabitants, on their own volition, decided to exterminate their Jewish neighbors during the year 1941. The author presents the causes of the massacre against the Jewish residents in Jedwabne by the neighbors who were non-Jews. In narrating the causes of the Jedwabne Jewish massacres, Gross takes two approaches that explore the ethnic identity categories that persisted at the time of holocaust and the role of individual choices.

In early 1939 in the Jedwabne town, a few kilometers from the historical province of Mazowsze, the police arrested and detained fifteen people. The names of the detainees were recorded in a liquidated report commonly referred to as the control-investigative files. These files were maintained by the police in a bid to track the progress of their investigations regarding various cases. Among the eight people that were detained included seasonal workers, farmers, a mason, two shoemakers, a letter carrier, two locksmiths, a former town hall receptionist, and a carpenter. Some of the detainees were family men and the youngest of the detainees was 27 years or age while the oldest was 64 years old. Basically, the detained men were persons of ordinary means.

The inhabitants of Jedwabne who totaled about two-thousand noticed the simultaneous arrests of what appeared to be numerous native inhabitants. They could not understand the meaning of the arrests until the detainees

were arraigned in the District Court at Lomza. The opening phrase of the indictment shed light on the whole issue. The defendants were being accused of engaging in the pogrom of their Jews neighbors. The book presents the horror of the way the Polish people participated in the killing of the Jews. The story tells of the way Jews in Jedwabne were hunted in their homes, the way the non-Jewish neighbors beat the Jews mercilessly and then burned them alive. In an unprecedented turn of events, the non-Jews neglected their neighborhood duties and took the side of the Germans to humiliate the Jews and eventually kill them. The author incorporates and vividly describes some of the most gruesome murders of about 1,600 Jewish men, women, and children within the vicinity of Jedwabne town. As such, he uses various Holocaust records to present a story that elaborates what really happened on the 10th of July 1941.

The narrative does not show any evidence of the involvement of Germans in the Jedwabne Jewish murders. As such, the atrocities that were carried out within Jedwabne were purely perpetrated by the Polish neighbors.

Accordingly, the author of this narrative seeks to show the homicidal intentions of the Poles towards the Polish Jews. The author portrays the Poles as the only cheerful, irrational sadists in Jedwabne during the duration of the Holocaust.

According to the book, the killing of the Jews by the Polish non-Jews had been preceded by various atrocities against the Jews in the Jedwabne region.

Some of the atrocities according to Gross included inhumane treatment of the Jews in Jedwabne's neighboring regions. An example is the murder of about 1,500 Jews at Radzilow and the massacre of about 1,200 Jews in

Wsoz. Like the murders in Jedwabne, the massacres in Wsoz and Radzilow included inhumane rituals. Gross observes that in regions other than Jedwabne the humiliation rituals were sometimes inspired by the Nazi inhabitants but the actual murders were carried out by the local Polish hooligans.

However, the author tries to exonerate the involvement of most Poles in the massacres by portraying most Poles as being the spectators during the murders. The spectators only watched the annihilation of their Jewish neighbors at the hand of the Polish hooligans approvingly or in utter derision. In this regard, the author gives the example of the scenario where some poles cheered when the Jewish women drowned their children and themselves in a bid to escape the imminent cruelty and incineration from their Polish neighbors. According to Gross, crowds of Poles who included men, women, and children cheered and laughed at the miserable Jewish victims as they were subjected to torture. Consequently, the doctor who was available declined to provide medical services to the victims and the Jews in general.

The book provides that even after the liberation of Poland, there was a period that was characterized by misrepresentation of facts and amnesia. Regarding that period the author notes that most of the murders were either denied or deliberately ignored. According to Gross this was also the case regarding the hunting down and the subsequent massacre of the few Jews who had managed to escape to the forests following the uprising that broke out in a death camp. The author observes that there was evidence of Poles in Warsaw laughing and cheering as the last Jewish victims of the ghetto

refused to surrender and instead decided to leap into flames. There was evidenced by films that were supplied by the German military archives. According to the book, such scenes were not shown in Poland and the few Poles that were willing to speak out about the atrocities were often hindered by the fellow Poles.

Gross traces the evidence that shows the atrocities that the Jews in Jedwabne underwent throughout the period of holocaust. He observes that an investigation aimed at punishing the Poles who were responsible for the atrocities led to the acquittal of ten defendants and subsequent release of a dozen suspects even before the end of their trials. He however notes that only one person was found to have actively participated in the massacre and sentenced to death. Gross recognizes that soon the atrocities were over and done with and the horrifying incidences that befell the Jews in Jedwabne were to be forgotten. It is noteworthy that the author himself managed to escape from Poland in a bid to elude the government-instigated anti-Semitic campaigns against the Jews.

According to the narrative, the period after the middle ages was characterized by the occasional Jewish hatred, which in more ways than one appeared understandable. However it is the sporadic hatred that became more conspicuous in Poland and Austria that would later appear impossible to do away with. To the author the Catholic Church has also played an important role in the spate of killings. As such, Gross draws attention to the fact that it is not only within the seemingly benign rural areas that bishops and priests deliver sermons that uphold the blood-libel practices. The blood-libel practices relate to the abduction of the Christian children for the

purposes of performing certain rituals. It is such kinds of rituals that according to Gross attracted so much hatred for the Jews. Intrinsically, some of the people including the prominent ones do not fail to register their displeasure with certain Jewish traditions and beliefs, including the then Roman Catholic Polish Cardinal Jozef Glemp. For Gross, the Jewish intellectuals acknowledge the Polish convictions and the participants in the Marxism and the tyranny among the Soviet repression.

Various neighborhoods have been influenced by the various inspirations based on the speculative and the academic performances. This is an experience counter to the existing authoritarianism. According to Gross, various experiences and occurrences are relatable and acknowledge the overwhelming evidence that illustrate the participation of the Poles in the murder of Jews in one way or another. Gross acknowledges the fact that most of the participants of the massacres were respectable academicians who were eager to dispute the evidence that he presents to support his assertions and the events in the late 1930s and early 1940s in Jedwabne. Such respectable persons also tried to label him as a traitor to the 'sacred' cause of Poland. However, there were others who welcomed Gross's condemnation and acknowledge the importance of his criticism of the events leading to the murder of about half the population of the people in Jedwabne because of their Jewish racial background.

For Glemp, the assertions that Gross makes in the book cannot be contested. Accordingly, the leadership was of the opinion that the Polish residents need to seek forgiveness for the atrocities that a part of the Polish population advanced against Jews. From the narrative, it is apparent that Gross is

inclined towards believing that there need to be a sincere change of emotional response is emerging within the beleaguered land. For Gross, nothing can really justify the dreadfulness of the despicable atrocities that were committed on the Jews by their neighbors at Jedwabne. If anything, Gross believes that telling the untold stories about what took place in Jedwabne will not be in vain.

Throughout the narrative, the narrator shows that contrary to popular belief, that the Germans influenced the Poles annihilation of Jews in Jedwabne and the neighboring lands, the Poles were willing executioners who triggered the annihilation of Jews. The book has definitely roused people regarding the anti-semitic atrocities thereby awakening readers about the Polish nation and its thoroughly concealed and made-up past happenings in Jedwabne. As the subtitle of the book suggests, all evidence of the events in Jedwabne around 1941 points to a definite conclusion, that the people behind the Jewish massacre were not the recently deployed German armed forces. Gross relies on the testimonies of some of the very few Jews who survived the Jewish annihilation to back his assertions. In a nutshell, the Polish residents in the Jedwabne town were culprits and not victims as some historians would want people to believe. The testimony of one Szmul Wazersztajn, a Jewish survivor in Jedwabne illustrates vividly the nature of the massacres of Jews within Jedwabne and its environs. Gross suggests that the accounts of Wazersztajn and his fellow survivors must be taken seriously because he finds no reason for the Jewish survivors to lie about their experiences at the hands of the rowdy Poles. If anything, the stories of the

survivors corroborate each other and echo what people within the Jedwabne region still say about their experiences at the time.

Reference List

Gross, Jan T. *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*. Penguin Books, 2002.