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Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz

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Poland suffered an exceedingly brutal Nazi occupation during the Second World War. Close to five million Polish citizens lost their lives as a result. More than half the casualties were Polish Jews. Thus, the second largest Jewish community in the world–only American Jewry numbered more than the three and a half million Polish Jews at the time–was wiped out. Over 90 percent of its members were killed in the Holocaust. And yet, despite this unprecedented calamity that affected both Jews and non-Jews, Jewish Holocaust survivors returning to their hometowns in Poland after the war experienced widespread hostility, including murder, at the hands of their neighbors. The bloodiest peacetime pogrom in twentieth-century Europe took place in the Polish town of Kielce one year after the war ended, on July 4, 1946.

Jan Gross's *Fear* attempts to answer a perplexing question: How was anti-Semitism possible in Poland after the war? At the center of his investigation is a detailed reconstruction of the Kielce pogrom and the reactions it evoked in various milieus of Polish society. How did the Polish Catholic Church, Communist party workers, and intellectuals respond to the spectacle of Jews being murdered by their fellow citizens in a country that had just been liberated from a five-year Nazi occupation?

Gross argues that the anti-Semitism displayed in Poland in the war's aftermath cannot be understood simply as a continuation of prewar attitudes. Rather, it developed in the context of the Holocaust and the Communist takeover: Anti-Semitism eventually became a common currency between the Communist regime and a society in which many had joined in the Nazi campaign of plunder and murder–and for whom the Jewish survivors were a standing reproach.

Jews did not bring communism to Poland as some believe; in fact, they were finally driven out of Poland under the Communist regime as a matter of political expediency. In the words of the Nobel Prize—winning poet Czeslaw Milosz, Poland's Communist rulers fulfilled the dream of Polish nationalists by bringing into existence an ethnically pure state.

For more than half a century, what happened to the Jewish Holocaust survivors in Poland has been cloaked in guilt and shame. Writing with passion, brilliance, and fierce clarity, Jan T. Gross at last brings the truth to light.

Praise for *Fear*

"You read [*Fear*] breathlessly, all human reason telling you it can't be so–and the book culminates in so keen a shock that even a student of the Jewish tragedy during World War II cannot fail to feel it."–Elie Wiesel, *The Washington Post Book World*

"Bone-chilling . . . [*Fear*] is illuminating and searing, a moral indictment delivered with cool, lawyerly efficiency that pounds away at the conscience with the sledgehammer of a verdict. . . . *Fear* takes on an entire nation, forever depriving Poland of any false claims to the smug, easy virtue of an innocent bystander to Nazi atrocities. . . . Gross' *Fear* should inspire a national reflection on why there are scarcely any Jews left in Poland. It's never too late to mourn. The soul of the country depends on it."–Thane Rosenbaum, *Los Angeles Times Book Review*

“Provocative . . . powerful and necessary . . . One can only hope that this important book will make a difference.”–Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Boston Globe*

“Imaginative, urgent, and unorthodox . . . The ‘fear’ of Mr. Gross’s title . . . is not just the fear suffered by Jews in a Poland that wished they had never come back alive. It is also the fear of the Poles themselves, who saw in those survivors a reminder of their own wartime crimes. Even beyond Mr. Gross’s exemplary historical research and analysis, it is this lesson that makes *Fear* such an important book.”–*The New York Sun*

“After all the millions dead, after the Nazi terror, a good many Poles still found it acceptable to hate the Jews among them. . . . The sorrows of history multiply: a necessary book.”
–*Kirkus* (starred review)

“Gross illustrates with eloquence and shocking detail that the bloodletting did not cease when the war ended. . . . This is a masterful work that sheds necessary light on a tragic and often-ignored aspect of postwar history.”–*Booklist* (starred review)

“[*Fear*] tells a wartime horror story that should forces Poles to confront an untold–and profoundly terrifying–aspect of their history.”–*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

From the Hardcover edition.

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Gilbert Pellerin:

Exactly why? Because this Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap this but latter it will jolt you with the secret the item inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who all write the book in such wonderful way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining method but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book have such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking way. So , still want to hold up having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

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