



## Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland

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## **Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland** Jan Grabowski

Judenjagd, hunt for the Jews, was the German term for the organized searches for Jews who, having survived ghetto liquidations and deportations to death camps in Poland in 1942, attempted to hide "on the Aryan side." Jan Grabowski's penetrating microhistory tells the story of the Judenjagd in Dabrowa Tarnowska, a rural county in southeastern Poland, where the majority of the Jews in hiding perished as a consequence of betrayal by their Polish neighbors. Drawing on materials from Polish, Jewish, and German sources created during and after the war, Grabowski documents the involvement of the local Polish population in the process of detecting and killing the Jews who sought their aid. Through detailed reconstruction of events, this close-up account of the fates of individual Jews casts a bright light on a little-known aspect of the Holocaust in Poland.

## **Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland Details**

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## From Reader Review Hunt for the Jews: Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland for online ebook

### RobS says

Extremely revealing of what went on in Poland during WWII.

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### Regina says

\*\* Review of Audio Format \*\*

Particularly Poignant

The Nazi's were ruthless before, during and after WWII. But the callousness and brutality of the Polish collaboration with the Nazi captors was hard to listen to. To charge a hunted person (that you may have known your entire life) and then, when that person could no longer pay you, turn them in to be summarily murdered is gut wrenching. Not only that but Grabowski presents evidence that the very people who did this then turned around and murdered holocaust survivors so they could keep the goods entrusted to them!

The horrors of the Holocaust are without end and the trials after the war did not catch a millionth of the perpetrators. I hope we never forget this and other genocides around the world that continue to this day.

The narration by Charles Norman was a good match for the gravity of this material. It felt at times like I was listening to a war documentary. His voice is very rich and deep and he let the right amount of emotion in at the right times. I did listen on 1.5 speed.

I received this audiobook for free through Audiobook Boom! in exchange for an honest review.

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### Yossi says

"In the summer of 1942, despite years of hunger, epidemics, and terror, some 2.5 million Polish Jews were still alive. Assuming, as the historical record seems to indicate, the around 10% of the Jewish population of the liquidated ghettos tried to flee the deportations, one can argue that 250,000 people made and active attempt to save themselves from the policies of extermination. Of that number...less than 50,000 survived the war...killed in the so called Judenjagd, or the Hunt for the Jews....Sometime in the spring, or perhaps in the summer of 1942, Jewish life, in the eyes of a large part of Polish society, had lost its value."

This thoroughly researched (but difficult to stomach) book, while not glossing over the 50,000 survivors and their sometimes righteous saviors, is the story of 200,000 Jews betrayed and murdered by their fellow Poles in the last years of the Second World War. Written by a Polish historian in 2011, and now translated into English, the book has played an important role in the ongoing debate in Poland itself regarding the role of Poles in the implementation of the Final Solution in German-occupied Poland.

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## Tim says

A harrowing read about the various ways Jews in Poland were hunted down. The underlying premise of this book, though not overtly stated, is that without significant help from the Polish population the Germans would not have succeeded in capturing and murdering so many Jews in Poland during the war. The author gives us countless examples of this being the case, often, to his credit, naming and shaming the perpetrators. I'm not sure how many Jews live in Poland these days but frankly I'm surprised any do. Not even German civilians murdered Jews which was far from being the case in Poland. The author concentrates his research on one rural part of Poland where, it would appear, there was little need of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda. It's thoroughly depressing how monstrous people can be. This is the kind of book that makes you despair of the human race.

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## Jan Peczkis says

### **Anti-Polish Hatchet Job Makes Mountains Out of Molehills. Ignores Wartime Context. "200,000 Jews Killed By Poles" Voodoo Numbers**

UPDATE (Nov. 2017). A new scholarly book soundly debunks the "Polish Complicity in the Holocaust" canard. See my detailed review of: *The Holocaust and European Societies: Social Processes and Social Dynamics (The Holocaust and its Contexts)*.

A much more objective book on the Poles and fugitive Jews of Dabrowa County under the German Nazi occupation, than that of Jan Grabowski vel Abrahamer, is that of Krwawe Upiory (Polish Edition). Please click on this item and read my detailed English-language review.

In HUNT FOR THE JEWS, the reader learns of some Poles denouncing Jews for the German reward of a bag of sugar, of grabbing anything that belonged to Jews, of even respectable Poles denouncing Jews, and of members of the Polish Blue Police (POLICJA GRANATOWA) drinking to assuage their acts against Jews, etc. Did you know that Jews acted in astonishingly the same ways (towards other Jews, and that even before the actual Holocaust)? Please click on *In Those Terrible Days: Writings from the Lodz Ghetto*, and read the detailed Peczkis review. Clearly, this overall repulsive conduct was severe wartime demoralization, and not some mythical Poles' "failure of the test of humanity" (p. 5).

Every nationality and every war has produced its share of collaborators (surprise--also Poles)--a fact acknowledged even by nationalistic Polish works. Thus, the constantly repeated mantra that Poles need to be disabused of the "heroic narrative" of their history is misplaced. More on this later.

This book is another "sequel" to Jan T. Gross. Most readers, affected by media spin, suppose that the investigative IPN Commission has proved Gross right on Jedwabne. For clarification, please see the first Comment under this review, and read my detailed English-language review of WOKOL JEDWABNEGO, which is the IPN Proceedings volumes.

My review is divided into the following topics:

GRABOWSKI'S UNRELIABLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION  
DABROWA TARNOWSKA COUNTY: THE "HEROIC NARRATIVE" STANDS  
SURVIVORSHIP OF FUGITIVE JEWS THROUGHOUT POLAND  
WHO DENOUNCED DABROWA'S FUGITIVE JEWS?

FACTORS IN POLISH ACTS AGAINST FUGITIVE JEWS  
"EXPLOITATIVE" AND "MURDEROUS" POLISH BENEFACTORS OF JEWS?  
AUTHOR JAN GRABOWSKI'S IDEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNING

GRABOWSKI'S UNRELIABLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Grabowski relies largely on postwar trials of alleged Polish collaborators. He asserts that the new Communist authorities did not tamper with these trials. (p. 12, 279-on). To the contrary: It is a well-known fact that the U. B. (Communist police) habitually beat suspects into giving the desired confessions and testimonies, and framed innocent people. However, even if Grabowski was technically correct, his contention would still fly in the face of reality. The early years of the Soviet-imposed puppet government were a reign of terror designed to intimidate the Polish nation into abject submission. There were tens of thousands of murders and eventually hundreds of thousands of arbitrary arrests. [One of my uncles permanently "disappeared" one day, even though he had never been involved in anything remotely political.] How could credible trials even be imagined in this toxic atmosphere?

Revealingly, Grabowski points out that the allegations of collaboration were based on accusations made by disgruntled neighbors, jilted lovers, and feuding relatives. How credible are they? One quoted testimony was made by a German who (allegedly) was told by a surrendered Jew that a Polish peasant had (allegedly) informed the German about a certain Pole (allegedly) engaging in collaboration. Hearsay!

The author complains that some defendants successfully shifting the blame to "conveniently" dead individuals, and that the A. K. (ARMIA KRAJOWA) reckoned that a Jew they had targeted had spied for the Germans. (pp. 275-276). [Such Jews definitely existed, and one of the A. K.'s highest priorities was self-protection through counter-intelligence.] Instead of only showing the weak, unverifiable, and my-word-versus-your-word character of the counter-allegations and alibis, does it not also say the VERY SAME about the original accusations themselves? Does it not point to the impossibility of determining what actually happened--including the justification or otherwise of the alleged Jew-killing?

This book also rests in part on decades-later trials of German defendants in Germany. Admittedly, the German defendants tended effectively to shift the blame to the Poles. (p. 14). In addition, the reader needs to know that the Jewish witnesses had, over time, tended to revert to the historic Germanophilic orientation of most Polish Jews. This likely made them less anti-German and, to relieve the dissonance, more anti-Polish. [This tendency also animates much current Jewish Holocaust-related thinking.] In addition, Holocaust survivors tended to graft into their memories incidents that they had heard from others but not experienced themselves. [See the Peczkis review of COLLECTED MEMORIES, by Christopher R. Browning.]

DABROWA TARNOWSKA COUNTY: THE "HEROIC NARRATIVE" STANDS

Grabowski concludes that, in this county, 51 fugitive Jews survived the war (p. 15), while another 200 were definitely killed through denunciation, and 14 were killed directly by locals (Table 5:2). This is out of 5,500-6,000 Jews in Dabrowa County, the vast majority of which were ghettoized, and then murdered at Belzec, by the Germans.

The 200 denounced begs the question about the ethnicities of the denouncers. Just because a local spoke Polish, and even had a Polish-sounding name, hardly means that he was necessarily an ethnic Pole. He could have also been a German (VOLKSDEUTSCHE). (In fact, even the matter of signing the VOLKSLISTE admittedly went as far as dividing families: p. 265). The POLICJA GRANATOWA had its share of embedded Polish-speaking German agents, ensuring Polish conformity to German directives, and enabling Germans to commit crimes against Jews as "Poles".

In addition, many Polish-speaking Ukrainians served the Germans, throughout German-occupied Poland,

and not only in native Ukrainian regions. As for Jewish denouncers of Jews in hiding, Grabowski mentions the ghettos, but glosses over their function in rural areas.

The serious reader should examine all this thoroughly. Study the detailed, objective, free online book: PATTERNS OF COOPERATION, COLLABORATION AND BETRAYAL: JEWS, GERMANS AND POLES IN OCCUPIED POLAND DURING WORLD WAR II, by Mark Paul.

The numbers presented by Grabowski, if accurate, are themselves telling. Since some denouncers were not ethnic Poles, and the average denouncer probably caused the death of more than one Jew, it follows that fewer than 200 Poles were responsible for the demise of the 200 proved (or half-proved) denounced Jews. This is a vanishing fraction of the nearly 60,000 rural Poles of Dabrowa County!

As for the incompleteness of the 200 figure, the implications do not change, as it cannot--at most--be many multiples greater. Of the 5,500-6,000 Jews living in this county, only a small fraction (up to perhaps 10%, that is, 550-600 or fewer) of them ever fled the ghettos and thereby became fugitive Jews.

In any case, the facts are clear. Grabowski has not presented ANY evidence that overturns the long-held so-called "heroic narrative"--namely that only a tiny fraction of 1% of the Polish population collaborated with the Nazis, in this case against Jews.

#### SURVIVORSHIP OF FUGITIVE JEWS THROUGHOUT POLAND

This work, if valid, is not necessarily representative of the rest of rural Poland. Grabowski scrupulously ignores every single one of the works of historian Marek Jan Chodakiewicz. In his BETWEEN NAZIS AND SOVIETS, Chodakiewicz shows that a relatively high 300 of 1,000 fugitive Jews, in another rural area of Poland, survived the German occupation (30%).

When it comes to all-Poland fugitive-Jew survival rates, Grabowski is tendentious. He rejects Jewish scholar Szymon Datner's estimate of 100,000 fugitive Jews surviving and another 100,000 fugitive Jews perishing (with and WITHOUT the acts of Poles). Instead, he arbitrarily prefers a newer figure of no more than 50,000 survivors--with as many as 200,000 fugitive Jewish perishing. (pp. 2-3). [Jan T. Gross once quoted the latter figure as fact.] In actuality, considering ALL scholarly estimates, the percentage of fugitive Jews in German-occupied Poland that survived the war could plausibly range from a low of 12% to a high of 71%. See POLISH-JEWISH RELATIONS 1939-1945, by Ewa Kurek.

The media has gone around parading the 200,000 figure as fact. No wonder the media is believed less and less.

#### FACTORS IN POLISH ACTS AGAINST FUGITIVE JEWS

Jan Grabowski oversimplifies Poles as having life-and-death powers over fugitive Jews under Nazi rule. (p. 5). Poles throughout German-occupied Poland were part of a corvee system, in which the Germans forced Poles into various forms of compulsory labor, only one of which potentially involved the hunt for fugitive Jews (JUDENJAGD). In addition, Poles acted under duress (as when Germans led the JUDENJAGDs), even when this was not obvious (when the Germans did not lead them directly). The reader should remember that the German-Polish relationship was not that between colleagues or partners. Far from it. It was one between conqueror and conquered, UBERMENSCHEN and UNTERMENSCHEN, master and servant, terrorizer and terrorized. Grabowski (p. 24) realizes that Poles were just one rung above the Jews, in German thinking, but evidently does not internalize this fact.

Grabowski dismisses the 1939-1941 Jewish-Soviet collaboration as locally irrelevant. Is the reader seriously supposed to believe that Polish anger over Jewish-Soviet collaboration existed ONLY in the geographic

areas in which it occurred?

The author briefly alludes to Jewish banditry, but fails to develop this pivotal subject. Banditry is commonly a capital crime during war. Considering additionally that Poles were living in near-starvation conditions under the German occupation, is it surprising that they reacted fiercely to news of Jewish banditry, and sometimes were receptive to German propaganda that characterized ALL ghetto-fleeing Jews as bandits? Polish participants in the JUDENJAGD likely thought themselves protectors of Poles from banditry rather than as hunters of Jews. What's more, the privations faced by Poles made even modest German rewards for denouncing Jews especially tempting.

Grabowski understates the German-imposed death penalty for the slightest Polish aid to Jews, and glosses over its full implications. Heroism, by its very nature, must be exceptional, and some peasants instead opted to denounce Jewish trespassers at once rather than risk a German "visit". [Frightened Poles sometimes first warned Jews of impending denunciation if the Jews did not leave the area. See the Peczkis review of ON BOTH SIDES OF THE WALL, by Vladka Meed.]

The accounts of Poles torturing and killing Jews are rather lurid. To the informed reader, they smack of old-fashioned GRUELPROPAGANDA, of the archetypical brutish GOY, and of the peasant-as-ogre Polonophobic tall tales of Jerzy Kosinski-Lewinkopf. Of course, some cruelties were real. Accustomed to the wanton savagery of the Germans [and of bandits], peasants sometimes imitated their cruelty (as, in parallel, did some Jewish kapos and Jewish ghetto policemen.)

Interestingly, the Germans prosecuted SZMALCOWNIKI for such offenses as bribing Germans and impersonating Gestapo personnel. (p. 262). This implicitly identifies them as all-around lowlifes, and not just extortionists of Jews. In addition, Grabowski realizes that Polish denouncers of Jews commonly later joined the dreaded Soviet-sponsored Communist security forces (U. B., or BEZPIEKA). (p. 267). This shows that such individuals (yes, including previously respectable citizens) were marginal members of Polish society in that they had no loyalty to Poles or Poland, nor sense of propriety. It also indicates that, rather than avid Jewish-property-getters or anti-Semites, they were equal-opportunity exploiters and killers of Poles as well as Jews. This even has a term: CHAMOKOMUNA (Boor Communism).

#### "EXPLOITIVE" AND "MURDEROUS" POLISH BENEFACTORS OF JEWS?

The author repeats Jan T. Gross' myth of "greedy" Poles requiring payment to hide and continue hiding fugitive Jews. In actuality, Poles, owing to the near-starvation conditions under the German occupation, usually were in no position to feed Jews gratis.

Grabowski also emphasizes horror stories of Polish benefactors turning on their Jews and killing them. The unsuspecting English-speaking reader is unaware of the fragile death-defying co-dependency. The Polish benefactor knew that, were the Jew to leave, he would likely fall into German hands and then try anything to save his life, including denunciation of his Polish benefactor, with fatal consequences to the Pole and his family, and even the entire village. Furthermore, the Germans encouraged denunciations, by captured Jews, of Polish benefactors (as well as fellow Jews), through false promises of spared lives in exchange for information. Clearly, the Polish benefactor, having run out of resources, of superhuman courage, or both, was in an unenviable kill-or-be-killed situation, and sometimes acted accordingly.

#### AUTHOR JAN GRABOWSKI'S IDEOLOGICAL UNDERPINNING

Note that Grabowski's bibliography features the usual small circle of left wing and Judeocentric authors (including Gross-clones and Gross-lites) to whom the author conforms. These include Omer Bartov, Ana Bikont, Barbara Engelking, Krystyna Kersten, and, of course, Jan T. Gross.

In addition, Jan Grabowski displays his bias through some whoppers. He euphemistically soft-pedals the murderous Soviet-serving Communist GL-AL as merely "left leaning". (p. 272). Incredibly, he also suggests that the postwar Communist authorities were lenient against ideological enemies, including members of the A. K. (p. 12). On what planet is Grabowski walking on?

Interestingly, Grabowski largely relies on a work edited by Feliks Tych for the "factual" low estimates of the survival rates of Poland's fugitive Jews. (p. 248). Tych is the son-in-law of super-Communist Jakub Berman, who Stalin handpicked to be one of the most powerful henchmen in Poland's original Communist puppet government. Is Tych credible?

A number of historians have identified Jan Grabowski as a neo-Stalinist. This is not in the sense of rehabilitating Joseph Stalin, but in the sense of resurrecting Stalinist-era motifs that demonize non-leftist Poles as incurable anti-Semites, fascists, and Nazis. Read the detailed Peczkis review of GOLDEN HARVEST OR HEARTS OF GOLD?

Finally, the reader should be aware of the fact that there has been, in recent years in Poland, a flurry of activities surrounding property restitution. Is the Holocaust Industry, with its efforts to extort massive "reparations" money from Poland, directly or indirectly behind this book?

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