

From the Editor:

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

D.P.K.

To the Editor:

Juliet Johnson's review of my book, *Capitalist Russia and the West* (*Slavic Review*, vol. 60, no. 4) is so full of omissions and inaccuracies that I feel compelled to set the record straight as best I can in one brief paragraph. Johnson claims, for example, that I made "selective use of sources" and "uncritically" used left-wing sources. In fact, of a total of 572 notes in five randomly selected chapters of my book, eight were from *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, four from *Pravda*, and two from *Trud*, all sources she identifies as "left." Johnson concludes her review by asserting that "those looking for a compelling leftist analysis of contemporary Russian foreign policy making will just have to wait a bit longer" (873). But given that the test of the validity of an analysis is its predictability, was not Vladimir Putin's move to align even more closely with the west post-9/11 rather smashing confirmation of my book's main thesis that, at least until 9/11, Russian leaders perpetrated a grand deception in collaboration with the leading western powers to make it appear that the former were "standing up" to an aggressive west, when in reality they have been almost unswervingly pro-western? Could Putin have made such a seemingly dramatic demarche on 9/11 if there were not already in place within the Russian government an ongoing tendency—and policy—of pro-westernism? How much more "compelling" could an analysis be? I ask my readers to read my book and judge for themselves.

JEFFREY SUROVELL
College of Aeronautics

Professor Johnson replies:

Jeffrey Surovell and I agree that Russia conducted a more pro-western foreign policy in the 1990s than most observers assumed. As my review pointed out, "in many respects, this book is a necessary corrective to the prevailing assumption that in 1993 Russian foreign policy took a decidedly anti-western turn from which it never recovered" (872). The review also noted that the book aptly documents several instances of Russia's anti-western rhetoric followed by Russian capitulation to western policies. Where we part company is on the cause of this phenomenon. Surovell argues that Russian leaders happily and willingly sold Russia out to the west for personal enrichment and that their occasional anti-western statements aimed only to camouflage this venality. Unfortunately, the book does not adequately support this causal contention. In particular, it fails to address contradictory evidence (such as Russia's reluctance to sell key strategic enterprises to foreigners) or engage alternative explanations (such as Russia's profound post-Cold War military and economic weakness). One need not, for example, believe that Russia's leaders engaged in a conspiratorial "grand deception" to understand why they could not block the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Similarly, Vladimir Putin has embraced the "war on terror" led by the United States primarily as a post-hoc justification for his own ongoing war in Chechnia, not because of his innate pro-western tendencies. For these reasons, as

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well as the others mentioned in my review, I found the book disappointing. But, as Surovell suggests, interested readers should examine the book and judge for themselves.

JULIET JOHNSON
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To the Editor:

I would like to respond to the criticism directed at me by Jan Tomasz Gross in his essay on his book, *Neighbors* (*Slavic Review*, vol. 61, no. 3). Among other things, he reproached me for the following: "Musiał is treating major historical controversies in transparent bad faith. Ostensibly engaging with the substance of historical interpretation, he actually diverts his reader's attention to the historiographical marginalia, which he often distorts, the better to draw attention away from the substantive scholarly and moral issues, to which he has no contribution to offer" (483–84). These are serious charges, but untrue.

Gross's criticism refers to the essay I published in the autumn 2001 issue of *Dzieje Najnowsze*, "Tezy dotyczące pogromu w Jedwabnem." There, I focused in particular on how Gross treated historical sources in his study of the murders at Jedwabne, pointing out countless examples when Gross blatantly ignored the basic rules of scholarly research. In conclusion, I stated: "Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors* contains numerous contradictions, erroneous interpretations, unhistorical speculations, and false statements. Furthermore, his publication levels serious allegations against specific individuals. As it turns out, his charges are based on unconfirmed sources, false accusations, and 'proof' constructed ad hoc by the author himself. The latter he later explains away as 'oversights.' . . . The shortcomings of this book disqualify both its intrinsic value and Gross's 'affirmative' approach to the sources" (278–79).

Scholarly treatment of historical sources is by no means "historiographical marginalia" (= "oversights") as Gross claims, but instead represents the foundation of historical scholarship. Gross repeatedly claimed that *Neighbors* was based on scholarly research. He should therefore be willing to have the book measured according to scholarly standards. Those standards are universal.

Gross claims that I have "no contribution to offer" to the "substantive scholarly and moral issues." In fact, the main focus of my scholarly work for the past years has been the fate of the Jewish population in Poland during World War II. My Ph.D. dissertation was on the persecution of Jews in occupied Poland ("Deutsche Zivilverwaltung und Judenverfolgung im Generalgouvernement," 1999), and I published an essay two years ago in *Yad Vashem Studies*: "The Origins of Operation 'Reinhard': The Decision-Making Process for the Mass Murder of the Jews in the Generalgouvernement." In addition, my "*Konterrevolutionäre Elemente sind zu erschossen*": *Die Brutalisierung des deutsch-sowjetischen Krieges im Sommer 1941* (2000) takes up the anti-Jewish pogroms in eastern Poland in the summer of 1941. In addition, I have written countless essays, newspaper articles, and lectures on this exact topic. At the moment, I am organizing an international conference dealing with the annihilation of Jews in occupied Poland. In all my works, I explicitly study the topic of Jewish-Polish relations during the German and Soviet occupations of Poland.

I categorically deny Gross's insinuation that I use "sarcasm" when writing about the mass murder of Jews in Jedwabne. Gross seems to wish to depict me as a person possibly amused by the tragic fate of these individuals. His is a libelous charge, a rhetorical device seemingly calculated to permit him to evade my scholarly criticism of his professionally unacceptable manner of dealing with historical sources. My aforementioned publications belie this charge of sarcasm.

One might draw the conclusion that Gross does not feel comfortable on scholarly grounds, as far as Jedwabne is concerned, for he introduced highly inappropriate metaphysical elements into the debate on the mass murder of the Jews in Jedwabne. Let us look at two examples. When queried by a journalist about the reasons for the massacre in Jedwabne, Gross responded: "The only explanation is as follows: the devil descended on earth. It does happen from time to time. Unless you have a different answer" ("Diabeł zstąpił do Jedwabnego," *Kontak*, 25 February 2001). Gross also claims to have experienced "an epiphany" that enabled him to realize that the key, but in fact questionable, document