

*Wokół Jedwabnego (The Case of Jedwabne)*, ed. Paweł Machcewicz and Krzysztof Persak, vol. I, *Studies*, 524 pp., vol. II, *Documents*, 1035 pp., Warszawa 2002. Wydawnictwo Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej — Komisji Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, index of persons, index of localities, biographical notes, abstracts in English.

The work is the result of research conducted by historians and lawyers from the Bureau of Public Education of the Institute of National Remembrance, the Institute of History and the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw University and the University of Białystok. The first volume contains studies which throw light on the genesis, historical context and actual events at the township Jedwabne and analyse the post-war trials of persons accused of murdering Jews. Paweł Machcewicz (*The Case of Jedwabne*) presents the discussion launched after the publication of Jan T. Gross's book *Neighbours*, the investigation into the crimes committed at Jedwabne and historians' research on this and similar crimes. He also briefly analyses the geography and scale of anti-Jewish excesses in the areas which were under Soviet occupation from 1939 to 1941 and were occupied by the Germans after 22 June 1941 as well as the mechanism and motives of these events. In a study *The Poles and Jews in Jedwabne and Its Neighbourhood before 22 June 1941* Jan J. Milewski sets the pogrom in the wide historical context of the coexistence of Poles and Jews in this small town since the 18th century, paying special attention to social and political conflicts in the pre-war period. Marcin Urynowicz depicts the demographic changes which took place in the Jewish community of Jedwabne from the end of the 19th century to 1941 against the background of the situation in the Łomża region. In the study *The Attitude of the Clergy of the Łomża Diocese to Anti-Semitism and the Extermination of Jews* Dariusz Libionka discusses the history of this diocese, the political leanings of the local clergy and the influence this exerted on the attitude to Jews and the Jewish question. He says that because of gaps in sources it is difficult to reconstruct the attitude and behaviour of the majority of the priest of this region to the extermination of Jews. In his study Marek Wierzbicki deals with Polish-Jewish relations in western Byelorussia in 1939–1941. He says that pogroms of Jews occurred as early as the autumn of 1939, soon after the Soviet invasion of Poland. Their main motive was revenge on Jews for their unconcealed friendly feelings towards the Soviets. The anti-Byelorussian reprisals which accompanied collectivisation and the gehenna of Jewish refugees changed the Jews' attitude to the Soviet reality. In the summer of 1941 revenge was taken on all Jews for the collaboration and pro-Soviet feelings of a part of the Jewish population. The next study, written by Andrzej Żbikowski, depicts the pogroms and murders of Jews in the Łomża and Białystok regions in the summer of 1941 in the light of the accounts of Jewish survivors and court

records. The analyses of pogroms in individual places made on the basis of these documents and the historical criticism of these documents are the most important part of this study. Edmund D m i t r ó w discusses the participation of units of the German Security Police and the Security Service in the extermination of Jews in the Łomża and Białystok regions in the summer of 1941. He has set the anti-Jewish excesses in a wide historico-geographical context covering the Baltic countries, eastern Galicia, Volhynia and Bessarabia. He tries to reconstruct the pogroms in the Łomża region and establish the Germans' participation in them. He says that the Germans created favourable conditions for the murders of Jews in Radziłów and Jedwabne, frequently initiated them and ensured immunity to the murderers. Andrzej R z e p l i ń s k i tries to establish whether the principles of a fair trial were observed in the proceedings against persons accused of murdering Jews in Jedwabne, and says that some functionaries of the District Public Security Office in Łomża and the Voivodship Public Security Office in Białystok as well as some prosecutors and judges who conducted these cases can be blamed for failing to fulfil the duties envisaged by the code of penal procedure and in this way harmed interest and the interest of the wronged persons. The studies included in the first volume end with Tomasz S z a r o t a 's specification which comprises: a calendar of facts which preceded the events at Jedwabne and can be connected with them, information on documents which can explain the genesis of the events, and publications on this subject brought out before May 2000, when J. T. G r o s s 's book appeared. It turns out that many publications on the crime at Jedwabne were brought out in Poland before May 2000, but they belittled the participation of the local people in the murder. Gross did not know most of these publications when he wrote his book.

Volume II contains 440 documents which explain the genesis, historical background, circumstances and the actual murders of Jews in Jedwabne, Radziłów and other places in the Łomża and Białystok regions in the summer of 1941. They include accounts by Poles and Jews as well as Polish, Jewish, German and Soviet sources contributed by various institutions and private persons in 1940-1974.

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