



Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold?: Studies on the Wartime Fate of Poles and Jews

Marek Jan Chodakiewicz

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Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold? is a collection of essays on Polish-Jewish relations during World War II. In search of the much-debated truths about those times - truths that are often distorted by a neo-stalinist analysis shaped by the Soviet occupation of Poland after its capture from the Nazis - the authors present the results of their historical research and analyses based on forensic evidence, primary sources and documents, and testimonials. Throughout the volume, the writers reject as extreme and indefensibly reductive two of the most popular - and contradictory - interpretations of the relations between Poles and Jews. The authors refer to these interpretations as the "black legend" and the "heroic mythology." In particular, the authors directly challenge the premise of Princeton University Professor Jan T. Gross, in his poorly documented book, *Golden Harvest* (Oxford, 2012). Alleging widespread and willful looting of Jewish homes, bodies and graves for a harvest of gold teeth, Gross perpetuates the myth of widespread Polish collaboration with the Nazi invaders of their country, including systematic looting of Jewish homes and cemeteries, and willful and mass-based participation in the extermination of their Jewish countrymen in Nazi death camps. In this book, the authors respond to Gross's "golden harvest" thesis with a "hearts of gold" rejoinder. Using exhaustive case studies, statistical data and archival research, the authors carefully document widespread Polish sympathy for their doomed Jewish countrymen, and acts of heroic resistance to the Nazis' "final solution." At a time when the simple act of sheltering a Jew for a night, sharing some bread or water, or simply not informing the authorities meant a death sentence for oneself and one's family, countless Polish citizens - especially peasants in the countryside - risked their very existence to help Jews escape and survive. Much of that heroism has taken mythological proportions to confront the demonization of the Poles. The authors document the fiction of the Golden Harvest and the extent of Poland's Hearts of Gold.

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