



December 2, 2016

President Andrzej Duda  
Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland  
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Dear President Duda:

I am writing on behalf of the American Sociological Association to express concern about recent actions in Poland that severely compromise the fundamental democratic principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression. We are particularly troubled by the new law that calls for fine or imprisonment of those who study Poland's past and reach well-researched conclusions that differ from the prevailing Polish government's narrative.

This is of special interest to us as sociologists given the pending court trial of our colleague, Polish-born sociologist and historian Jan Tomasz Gross, one of the foremost scholars of the Holocaust in the world. After a year-long investigation, the case against Professor Gross for defaming the Polish nation by writing about Poles' complicity in the persecution of Jews during World War II was dismissed. Shortly thereafter, however, the dismissal was overturned and Professor Gross is again under investigation. The legal merits for such a turn seem to be absent.

Professor Gross is a highly respected scholar at Princeton University, who has published world renowned books translated into many languages, such as *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (2001, Penguin Books), *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz* (2006, Random House), and *Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust* (with Irena Grudzinska Gross, 2012, Oxford University Press).

Should Professor Gross ultimately have files charged against him for allegedly insulting the Polish nation, there is no doubt that there will be an adverse response from the international scholarly community, including not only those scholars and institutions engaged in Holocaust research and memorialization but, given the overarching threat to academic freedom, the broader community as well. While it is often difficult for nations to face uncomfortable historical truths, such honest confrontation is a cornerstone of a democratic society. The world's opinion of Poland will only be harmed by an attempt to suppress legitimate scholarly inquiry.

As a representative of the world's largest professional association for sociologists with 12,000 members across the globe, I ask you to protect the scholarship of Professor Gross and the ongoing pursuit of truth which characterizes Gross' scholarship and the scholarship of countless others.

Sincerely,

Michèle Lamont  
President, American Sociological Association