

legitimate German grievances and blamed Prague for not putting its house in order. They also discounted any possibility that Henlein was a tool of Berlin, and Vansittart even met him in London. Vansittart became disillusioned with Henlein no later than October 1937, when the Foreign Office obtained evidence of Germany's funding of the SdP, of which N. makes no mention. Perhaps the author overlooked the importance of that discovery because it brought about no visible change in British policy. But the underlying reasons for the continued advocacy of an improvement in the status of the German minority were largely a matter of handling the Third Reich: Vansittart wanted to strip the Germans of their excuse for meddling in Czechoslovakia's affairs and buy some time in the process.² This was part of his policy recommendations for the purpose of containing Germany, since he thought, unlike many of his colleagues, that German hegemony over Central Europe would endanger Britain's security. He and Orme Sargent, Assistant Under-Secretary, proposed to do for Czechoslovakia what Britain had done for Austria—to express interest for the independence of that country, even if that was no more than “a judicious bluff.”³ Ultimately, it was Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's taking control over foreign policy that militated against any attempt to support Prague diplomatically. As Britain could not intervene in Berlin without being snubbed, it exerted pressure on Edvard Beneš to grant concessions, and eventually full autonomy, to the Germans. The nature of a settlement was of no importance; it was all about preventing Germany from going to war for the alleged protection of Sudeten Germans.

None of these crucial developments are explained in N.'s exegesis. He does not engage with the vast literature on British foreign policy and the Foreign Office, or with the more modest number of works relating to his specific theme. It is telling that he refers (just a few times) to Ph.D. theses rather than published monographs by Gábor Bátonyi, Michael Roi and the reviewer. He also displays a strange confusion with respect to the position of important individuals within the British establishment. For example, Sargent was not a “British politician” and Vansittart was not “the second highest official in the Foreign Office” (p. 119). Moreover, N.'s references do not fit with any standard convention, while the main text is replete with atrocious errors of grammar, spelling and syntax, and with missing words and quotation marks, which at times make it extremely difficult to grasp the meaning. The book should not have been published in such a poor state.

Beograd

Dragan Bakić

² Vansittart minute, 1937-01-14, *ibidem*, R 133/133/12, FO 371/21125.

³ Sargent memorandum “Problem of Czechoslovakia,” 1937-01-11, *ibidem*, R 622/188/12, FO 371/21126; Vansittart minute, 1937-02-16, *ibidem*, C 926/270/18, FO 371/20734.

Political and Transitional Justice in Germany, Poland and the Soviet Union from the 1930s to the 1950s. Hrsg. von Magnus Brechtken, Władysław Bułhak und Jürgen Zarusky. Wallstein Verlag. Göttingen 2019. 336 S. ISBN 978-3-8353-3561-5. (€ 39,10.)

This edited volume is a collection of 16 papers that were originally presented at an international conference in Warsaw in 2015. The goal of the conference was to demonstrate through historical analyses of multiple case studies how two seemingly separate spheres of justice—political and transitional—can intertwine and become difficult to distinguish from one another. Transitional justice, encompassing legal processes of prosecuting and punishing for crimes committed by a previous regime, becomes entangled with political justice when these legal processes start being employed for political purposes. The convergence of political and transitional justice is the central theme tying all chapters together.

In the introduction, editors Magnus Brechtken, Władysław Bułhak and Jürgen Zarusky present three institutions whose close research collaboration led to the publication of the volume: the Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History in Germany, the Insti-

tute of National Remembrance in Poland and the Memorial Society in Russia. The editors emphasize that the histories of these institutions reflect the experiences of their respective countries in living through authoritarianism, totalitarianism, the Second World War and, ultimately, in facing the problem of coming to terms with such a turbulent past. While German, Polish and Soviet historical experiences of the 1930s–1950s exhibit numerous differences, the volume aims to overcome national divisions and contribute to establishing common transnational perceptions of power and justice. In seeking to achieve that objective, researchers from the three institutions collaborated and exchanged academic views, resulting in a refreshing and novel approach to historical research.

Yan Rachinsky, Yuri Shapoval, Iryna Ramanova and Nikita Petrov analyze practices of political justice in the Soviet Union. In their in-depth studies, the researchers reveal the Stalinist regime's forms of political justice, which manifested themselves mainly in extra-judicial convictions, i.e. delivering guilty verdicts without defendants appearing before judicial bodies. Political authorities would predetermine the outcome of the trials in order to use judicial proceedings for intimidating people, suppressing political opponents and asserting the regime's authority rather than for prosecuting and punishing for crimes in a legally appropriate manner. As such, the case studies analyzed in these four chapters serve as examples of political justice par excellence. One distinctive feature of the Stalinist regime's practices of political justice is that they were meant to receive extensive public attention and reach a broad audience. For that reason, these quasi-legal proceedings are dubbed "show-trials."

The chapter by Ingo Müller reveals that, in contrast to other totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, where the government's control of the judiciary is typically somewhat concealed or denied (as was the case in the Soviet Union), the Nazis openly abolished the constitutional legal system. In other words, National Socialist ideology effectively became the law and courts derived their legitimacy from the will of the *Führer*. Ingo Loose and Maximilian Becker complement this argument in their chapters on the Special Courts. They provide further evidence of how Hitler's regime eradicated legal principles, turned the judicial system into the government's instrument of terror and harnessed it to implement racial policy as well as to justify the invasion and annexation of Poland. Furthermore, the chapter by Hubert Seliger demonstrates that it was not only judicial institutions but also lawyers who contributed to the implementation of political justice, some of whom preserved such an approach to judicial procedures even after the collapse of the Nazi regime.

Poland's post-war attempts of reconciling with the past are a particularly complex case. Not only did the country experience the invasion, occupation and annexation by both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, but it also fell under the Soviet sphere of influence following the end of the war. Naturally, this meant that Polish judicial authorities had to turn a blind eye to Soviet crimes. However, even when prosecuting German war criminals, justice and political power were often compounded. Indeed, as shown in the chapter by Paulina Gulinska-Jurgiel, some post-war judicial proceedings in Poland fitted the notion of transitional justice, and, as Adam Dziurok contends, some courts managed to deliver fair and just verdicts. Nonetheless, in many cases political motives, primarily the removal of political opponents and the legitimization of the Communist government, determined the outcome of the trials, as argued in the chapters by Andrzej Paczkowski, Bulhak, and Joanna Lubecka. Relatedly, Marek Kornat analyzes the legal aspect of political justice practices and discusses the principle of just retribution in Poland's legal doctrine when prosecuting and punishing Nazi criminals. Building on the same theme, Jarosław Rabinski's chapter demonstrates that judicial processes could also be aimed at the delegitimization not of a foreign regime but of a previous domestic regime. Furthermore, Łukasz Jasinski's comparative study shows that Czechoslovakia's post-war judicial practices were similar to those in Poland, which solidifies the claim that, despite national differences, states encounter similar problems concerning the relationship between political power and justice.

This edited volume could have benefited immensely from a solid conclusion, reiterating the present-day relevance of historical enquiry into cases of political and transitional justice. Instead, the book leaves it up to the reader to draw lessons from the past. Obstruction of transitional justice by exertion of political power indeed remains a matter of global significance in the twenty-first century. Over the last 15 years, the International Centre for Transitional Justice assisted more than 40 states in bringing about justice for victims of atrocities committed under repression and in conflict. From Colombia to Tunisia and from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Myanmar—these states stretch across the continents.

Nevertheless, all in all, this edited volume provides a wealth of new empirical data, and brings to the fore the complexity of the nexus between justice and political power. It comprises a broad range of extensively researched case studies, thereby filling a niche in an underexplored field of research. The most valuable contribution of this volume is rooted in its comparative approach, as it brings out commonalities as well as idiosyncrasies in the historical experiences of Germany, Poland and the Soviet Union. Such an approach supports the compelling argument that political and transitional justice are often inextricable, despite the distinctiveness of national historical experiences of different states. The edited volume thereby underscores the complicated linkage between transitional and political justice, which is just as salient and challenging today as it was over seven decades ago.

Berlin

Agne Cepinskyte

Ljudmila Nikitina: Moisej (Mečislav) Vajnberg. Po stranicam žizni čerez dokumenty, vospominanija i issledovanija. [Mieczysław Weinberg. Lebensstationen in Dokumenten, Erinnerungen und Untersuchungen.] Moskva 2019. 200 S. ISBN 978-5-600-02558-5.

Das Werk des Komponisten Mieczysław Weinberg (1919–1996) stößt seit einigen Jahren auf wachsendes Interesse. Weinbergs Musik erklingt inzwischen international, z. B. im Rahmen großer Musikfestivals (in Hamburg und Manchester), und fügt sich allmählich ins Standardrepertoire ein. Dabei gelangen u. a. auch seine Bühnenerwerke, insbesondere die Oper *Passażirka* (Die Passagierin), zur Aufführung.

Der Komponist war in fast allen musikalischen Gattungen produktiv und schuf u. a. 26 Symphonien, sieben Opern, Instrumentalkonzerte, Kammer- und Vokalkompositionen, Ballette, Musik für Theater und Kino. Die Dirigenten Kurt Sanderling, Gennadij Rožděstvenskij, Rudolf Baršai, Kirill Kondrašin, Vladimir Fedoseev, Mark Ermler u. a. setzten sich für seine Musik ein, aber auch bedeutende Instrumentalsolisten wie die Geiger Leonid Kogan und David Ojstrach, die Cellisten Mstislav Rostropovič und Daniil Šafran, der Pianist Emil Gilel's und das Borodin-Quartett. Um Weinbergs Schaffen noch umfassender und gezielter zu vermitteln, gründeten vor einigen Jahren der Geiger Linus Roth und der Dirigent Thomas Sanderling eine internationale Weinberg-Gesellschaft.

Parallel dazu ist das Interesse an der Erforschung des Komponisten und seines Werks angewachsen. So fand 2017 in Moskau ein Weinberg gewidmeter Musikologen-Kongress statt, und mehrere Studien in deutscher Sprache stehen zur Verfügung.¹ Mit dem Buch von Ljudmila Nikitina, einer am Moskauer Konservatorium lehrenden Professorin für Musikwissenschaft, liegt nunmehr, soweit zu übersehen, die erste russischsprachige Monografie über den Komponisten vor.

N. nähert sich Weinberg weniger unter musikologischem Vorzeichen (auf ein Werk- und Literaturverzeichnis wird verzichtet) als in Gestalt locker gefügter Essays, die einzelne

¹ DAVID FANNING: Mieczysław Weinberg. Auf der Suche nach Freiheit, Hofheim 2010 (Biografie und Werkverzeichnis); VERENA MOGL: „Juden, die ins Lied sich retten“ – der Komponist Mieczysław Weinberg (1919–1996) in der Sowjetunion, Münster – New York 2017; DANUTA GWIZDALANKA: Der Passagier. Der Komponist Mieczysław Weinberg im Mahlstrom des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, Wiesbaden 2020.