

Anikó Boros: Die Ermordung ungarischen Juden 1944 in Pusztavám. Zeugenschaft und Erinnerung im transnationalen Kontext. (Studien zur Ostmitteleuropaforschung, Bd. 49.) Verlag Herder-Institut. Marburg 2020. VIII, 286 S., 11 Ill., 2 Kt. ISBN 978-3-87969-445-7. (€ 55,-)

Anikó Boros' book is a welcome addition to the historiography of the Holocaust in Hungary, of Hungarian-German history, of memory culture, and of how to use testimonies as sources. It is a book rich in arguments, thoughts, and documentation.

The Holocaust arrived late in Hungary, but it arrived with a vengeance. Many studies of the Hungarian Holocaust focus on the deportations to Auschwitz in the spring of 1944 or on the various attempts to save Jews in Budapest, and more recently on the first Hungarian deportation of Jews, already in the summer of 1941, to Kamenetsk-Podolsk. There have been fewer studies of a massacre of Jews on Hungarian territory.¹

B. focuses on the mass killing in Pusztavám that took place on 16 October 1944. She examines who lived in the village (mainly Hungarian Germans), who the Jews were who found themselves there in 1944, and who was involved in the killing, as well as how people remembered and explained what happened after the fact. Pusztavám was a Hungarian-German village until the end of the war; the inhabitants were mainly members of the German minority (Danube Swabians who probably settled there in the eighteenth century). Like many Hungarian-German villages during the war, Pusztavám had a local chapter of the Volksbund der Deutschen in Ungarn (a National Socialist organization based in Hungary). In the autumn of 1944, two Jewish labor service companies were stationed in Pusztavám. These labor service companies consisted of Jewish servicemen who were compelled to serve the Hungarian military during the war. They were not soldiers per se; they were supposed to assist the army. When news arrived in October 1944 that the leader of Hungary, Miklós Horthy, was going to conclude a peace agreement with the Allies, the Jewish members of the labor service companies stationed in Pusztavám rejoiced. When the peace did not arrive and Horthy was removed from power and replaced with the leader of the Hungarian Arrow Cross, Ferenc Szálasi, more than 200 Jewish forced laborers in Pusztavám were rounded up and murdered.

After the war, several investigations were conducted in order to determine what had taken place in Pusztavám and bring those responsible to trial. Already in 1947 the Székesfehérvár People's Court reached a verdict, but the judgment was not enforced and those involved were not identified. Instead the memory of the mass murder in Pusztavám has been and continues to be "fought over, manipulated, and instrumentalized" (p. 2). This is why there has thus far not been a satisfactory study of this massacre, and why this book fills a gap in the research.

In order to investigate this mass murder, and especially the memory of what happened, B. has analyzed more than two hundred testimonies, thousands of pages of documents, and hundreds of articles, newspapers, and sites of remembrance. She approaches this material from the perspective of memory studies, seeking to demonstrate that the testimonies, many of which were originally collected as legal evidence, can also provide insight concerning larger macro events at the time the testimonies were collected.

In her analysis of the testimonies (this is the longest section of the book), B. describes how such accounts are subject to the tension between fiction and non-fiction, as well as between trust and distrust. She also demonstrates how the interviewer was involved in framing and giving meaning to the testimonies.

An important aspect of B.'s study is the competitive victimhood that is evident in the testimonies. Several Pusztavám witnesses presented themselves as victims of Volksbund activities during the war, thereby diverting attention from the victims of the mass murder.

¹ TAMÁS STARK, GEORGE EISEN: The 1941 Galician Deportation and the Kamenets-Podolsk Massacre: A Prologue to the Hungarian Holocaust, in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 27 (2013), 2, pp. 207–241.

Hungarian authorities were also interested in focusing on the crimes of the Volksbund and Hungarian Germans, not necessarily on crimes against Jewish members of the labor service companies. B. sometimes refers to these kinds of testimonies as opportunistic. The competition for interpretation was frequently between explanations concerning escape, expulsion, and the Holocaust. This resulted in a lack of investigations—or at least of thorough ones—into the history of the mass murder of Jews in Pusztavám.

A new kind of testimony began to appear with the video interviews carried out by the Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archives at the University of Southern California.² Now the interviewers' questions could be heard, and gestures, narrative speed, and style could all be seen. There were new aspects to interpret, as well as new ways to analyze the testimonies concerning the mass murder in Pusztavám.

This is a very important book; one that deserves to be read by a wide audience. Scholars and students interested in the Holocaust in Hungary and the Holocaust in general will find this study fascinating. It should also be read by individuals interested in both Hungarian-German history and Hungarian as well as East Central European history more generally. When this reviewer conducted research on the Hungarian Germans, it was quite difficult to find material on Hungarian Germans and the Holocaust. This book provides a starting point for further research and should also spark a more thorough conversation about what scholars can learn from such testimonies.

Chattanooga

John C. Swanson

² <https://sfi.usc.edu/about> (2021-10-31).

Violent Resistance. From the Baltics to Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe 1944–1956. Hrsg. von Michael Gehler und David Schriffel. Ferdinand Schöningh. Leiden u. a. 2020. XI, 457 S. ISBN 978-3-506-70304-0. (€ 72,90.)

In recent years, historians have begun to devote increasing attention to a fact of which many inhabitants of Eastern Europe have long been aware: that violence and warfare did not end with the German capitulation in May 1945. After the defeat of the Axis powers, paramilitary and partisan groups engaged in armed struggle, and efforts to resist Communist rule and Soviet hegemony continued across the eastern half of the European continent for years.

This is the focus of the collection edited by Michael Gehler and David Schriffel, which contains 18 contributions from a conference on “Armed Resistance in Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1956” held in Vienna in 2017. It brings together well-researched articles about the “postwar” anti-Communist resistance in almost all the countries of Eastern Europe. (The exception is Latvia and its role in the guerrilla war of the “Forest Brothers” across the Baltic countries until 1956.) Not only does the collection reveal the extent of the violence that affected Eastern Europe after 1945, it also sheds light on contemporary European politics. As Schriffel notes in the introduction, the contributions clearly show “the importance that national narratives now give to the anti-Communist resistance as a focal point of self-identification” (p. 3).

What is the picture that emerges from the detailed accounts assembled here? It comes as no surprise that the resistance struggles in the various countries of Eastern Europe showed considerable diversity. As Sch. points out, “Every country, every society fought its own battles” (p. 10). Some (like in Lithuania) were more successful than others (e.g., Estonia) in mobilizing a significant military force; in some instances, resistance groups had grown out of the struggle against German occupation (e.g., the Armia Krajowa in Poland), while in others supporters of the resistance had collaborated with the Germans against the Soviet Union (e.g., in the Baltic countries). In some cases (e.g., in Ukraine) there was unofficial friendly interaction between anti-Communist and Soviet forces; and while some (e.g., the Forest Brothers, particularly in Lithuania) engaged in significant military vio-