

gehenden polnischen Besatzung Teschens und dem Nationalitätenkonflikt zwischen Tschechen, Polen und Sudetendeutschen.

Der vierte Bericht beschreibt die Erlebnisse eines Fallschirmjägers auf Kreta; diese erste Fallschirmjägeroperation der Militärgeschichte ging zwar für die Deutschen siegreich aus, kostete aber enorm viele Menschenleben. Zuletzt erfahren wir von den Schrecknissen des Partisanenkrieges in Istrien. Der Leidensweg eines 16-jährigen „Volksgrenadiers“, der den Rückzug aus Polen, die „große Flucht“ aus Preußen, die Schlacht an der Oder und zuletzt die russische Kriegsgefangenschaft erlebt und erlitten hat, bildet den Inhalt des fünften Berichts.

Der sechste Bericht widmet sich den Erinnerungen an das Kriegsende und die jugoslawische Gefangenschaft. Um der wirtschaftlichen und politischen Situation unter der polnischen Okkupation Teschens zu entgehen, meldete sich der Verfasser des siebten Berichts zur deutschen Kriegsmarine. Den Anfangsdienst leistete er auf einem Minenräumboot in Frankreich, später im Schwarzen Meer vor der Krim, zuletzt in der Nordsee. Seine plastische Darstellung vom zerbombten und brennenden Bremerhaven erschüttert den Leser ebenso wie jene von einer Meuterei und dem darauffolgenden Verfahren vor einem Kriegsgericht. Der achte und letzte Bericht stammt ausnahmsweise nicht von einem gebürtigen Tschechen, sondern von einem Deutschen, der sich in der Zwischenkriegszeit aus beruflichen Gründen in der Tschechoslowakei niedergelassen hatte, aber von der Wehrmacht eingezogen wurde. Im Krieg erlebte er die Feldzüge nach Polen, Frankreich und auf den Balkan; nach kurzem Zwischenspiel als Bergwerksarbeiter machte er die Schlacht um Königsberg mit, wurde dort verwundet, floh aus der russischen Kriegsgefangenschaft, wurde amtlich als „deutscher Heimatloser“ geführt und erhielt wie alle nichtvertriebenen Deutschen 1953 im Interesse der „Aufrechterhaltung der Volkswirtschaft“ die tschechoslowakische Staatsbürgerschaft.

Die in diesem Buch vorgestellten, hochinteressanten und spannend zu lesenden Augenzeugenberichte sind historisch wertvolle Zeitdokumente, zumal die beschriebenen Kriegserlebnisse jeweils einleitend wissenschaftlich erläutert und in den historischen Kontext gestellt werden. Sie bieten jedem an der Geschichte Interessierten, ob Fachmann oder Laie, wichtige Aufzeichnungen und sorgen dafür, dass die Erinnerung an die dunklen Seiten der Vergangenheit und an die endlosen Leidenswege der Kriegsgeneration nicht verloren geht.

Wien

Bertrand Michael Buchmann

Polizei und Holocaust. Eine Generation nach Christopher Brownings „Ordinary Men.“ Hrsg. von Thomas Köhler, Jürgen Matthäus, Thomas Pegelow Kaplan und Peter Römer, unter Mitarbeit von Annika Hartmann und Kathrin Schulte. Brill Schoeningh. Paderborn 2023. 305 S., Ill. ISBN 978-3-506-79282-2. (€ 24,90.)

Consistency and coherence are perennial issues of edited volumes. Some people might say that in the given case it is a considerable one, and even find the title deceptive, since only some of the essays collected in this book refer directly to the role of the police in the Holocaust. Other contributions refer to the Holocaust in more general ways, its commemoration, the juridical aftermath of mass murder in the East, or the applicability of Christopher Browning's "ordinary men" thesis¹ beyond the Holocaust. However, this could also be seen as a strength because this diversity demonstrates how perpetrator studies can and do inform other areas of research and public debate.

1 CHRISTOPHER BROWNING: *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, New York 1992, suggests that antisemitism and NS-ideology played a lesser role in the murderous practice on the ground than thought previously. Instead of this he puts more emphasis on the logics of the situation, psycho-social dynamics like peer pressure etc. that made many "ordinary men" opt to become killers over time.

The latter contributions point out that it was harder and took a longer time for *Ordinary Men* to sink into public consciousness, or schoolbooks for that matter, than *Willing Executioners*. What the public welcomed in Daniel Goldhagen's book² was exactly what many scholars criticized: the argument's simplicity. This points to the more general problem of academic historiography that historians often cannot serve people's desire for clearcut answers and unambiguous moral judgments.

Derrick Angermeier discusses whether the research on Holocaust perpetrators could be used to interpret and understand extreme violence in other contexts, namely lynching in the southern states of the U.S. during the Jim Crow period. Some elements of Browning's *Ordinary Men* thesis, indeed, seem to be helpful in this respect. Similarly to the first stage of the Holocaust, spaces of opportunity opened up where laws did not apply anymore, where norms began to shift, and where ordinary people opted for extreme violence under the condition of impunity. However, as Angermeier reminds us, in the U.S. the framework of total war was missing; furthermore: the Black population was not seen as a group that had to be annihilated. One could add that voluntarism and self-empowerment played a much more important role in the U.S. than during the Holocaust, even if in the latter case individual perpetrators sometimes took the initiative or pushed for more extreme forms of violence. After all, German soldiers and policemen were sent by the state to kill—nothing like this could be said about the lynching mob. These differences must be reflected on carefully; however, it seems that the shifting of norms and the creation of spaces of opportunity and impunity are important factors for extreme violence in general. While the former are not sufficient conditions for the latter, they certainly massively increase the *probability* that opportunities are taken up. What causes this type of space to open up might be of less interest than the question of how individuals and groups make use of these conditions.

Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, Oliver von Wrochem, and Amos Goldberg touch on the question of what the Holocaust means or should mean for non-Europeans. There is a European and Northern American tendency to see the Holocaust as the ultimate crime and evil. In the Global South, however, mass murder of white people by white people might not necessarily be seen as more relevant than white peoples' atrocities during colonialism. Wrochem illustrates this through the example of people with migrant background in contemporary Germany, while Goldberg presents us the different perspectives and narratives of Israelis and Palestinians. The latter did not see Jews as survivors of the Holocaust coming into the region, but as settlers, colonizers and conquerors. While this is the easy part to understand, the more difficult part for many Europeans is to realize that claiming the Holocaust to be the universal reference point of human rights' violations can—with some reason—be perceived as Eurocentrism from a non-European perspective; and the hardest part for people from the Northern Hemisphere might be the fact that not only their perspective matters. These are questions and problems that do not ask for final settlement, especially not only from one side, but rather for constant and ongoing intercultural conversation and negotiation.

Dan Michman's "neo-intentionalism" is an interesting intervention in the field. For some time, classic intentionalism seemed to be dead in the water. However, functionalism in its many variations might have been the victim of its own temporary success. Many theories turn into cul-de-sacs when they exhaust their innovative potential. Looking for alternatives, researchers sometimes come up with new ideas, sometimes they dedust the shelf warmers. Michman's thesis might be an example for the latter case, however, there is more to it. After all, there has been a certain return of ideology and antisemitism in perpetrator studies as the editors make clear in their introductory remarks; a recent study argues strongly that fanatical junior officers played a crucial role as catalysts and instigators of

2 DANIEL J. GOLDHAGEN: *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, New York 1996.

extreme violence.³ This might be partly due to perspective. Identical anti-Semitic tropes might sound like mere rhetorical monstrosities in official documents, but as a concrete mindset and genuine conviction in personal documents. Michman's thesis about the Jewish question might be compatible with more recent forms of functionalism.⁴ After all, functionalists would not deny that without antisemitism the Holocaust would hardly have taken off as a project. However, Michman would have to demonstrate that the "destruction of the Jewish spirit" was *the*, or one of the most important aims of Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists in contrast to the resurrection of Germany's power, the revision of the Treaty of Versailles, etc.; there would still be the need to explain how the aim to remove this spirit's influence turned into physical annihilation. And this explanation, obviously, could not be an intentionalist one. Overall, it seems that the stronger emphasis on antisemitism in recent perpetrator studies does not steer us back to intentionalism, but rather to a better functionalist understanding why the murder of the Jews gained such strong momentum once it became possible.

The contributions by Doris L. Bergen and Edward B. Westermann make the point that gendered, or sexual violence was an integral part of the German war of annihilation in the East and that extreme forms of masculinity are at the root of it. Particularly, the evidence provided by Westermann supports the thesis. It is certainly worth emphasizing these crimes because they have usually been overshadowed by the greater crime of physical mass annihilation. However, masculinity has not been completely absent from perpetrator studies.⁵ It should also be said that neither extreme forms of masculinity, nor sexual violence were unique to Nazi Germany's war of annihilation in the East; they are common features of all wars; even societies not at war are often steeped in them, the difference rather being one of degree. Both sexual violence and mass murder in the German war against the Soviet Union may have had their basis in extreme masculinity; but while the latter probably cannot be left out of any explanation, the concept seems to present a problem similar to that of "antisemitism": it is rarely absent, but there is not always rape or murder. Because of their dispositional character, neither antisemitism nor masculinity can sufficiently explain concrete acts of violence. But this brings us back to conditions and socio-psychological dynamics we must understand in the first place. And it brings us back to Browning. The "101ers" might not have been typical for Nazi Germany's killer units; partly, therefore, the spurring role of ideology, antisemitism, and personal fanaticism might have been underemphasized (if not for the unit, then for the larger picture); *mutatis mutandis* the role of masculinity for sexual violence. However, if people on the less radicalized side of the spectrum turn into mass murderers under certain conditions, then Browning's study on the Reserve Police Battalion 101 might still tell us more than studies on other killing units composed of younger and more radical members. It comes with the disquieting thesis that contexts have a more shaping influence on people than people have on contexts; that opportunities and possibilities in a certain situation are more important than pre-existing wishes, desires, or beliefs; that the latter often change due to the former; that it would be naïve to deny that most people could become mass murderers under certain con-

3 IAN RICH: *Holocaust Perpetrators of the German Police Battalions*, London 2018, p. 178.

4 RICHARD BESSEL: *Functionalists vs. Intentionalists: The Debate Twenty Years On or Whatever Happened to Functionalism and Intentionalism?*, in: *German Studies Review* 26 (2003), 1, pp. 15–20.

5 FRANK WERNER: "Hart müssen wir hier draußen sein": Soldatische Männlichkeit im Vernichtungskrieg, 1941–1944, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 34 (2008), 1, pp. 5–40, here p. 33; THOMAS KÜHNE: *Introduction: Masculinity and the Third Reich*, in: *Central European History* 51 (2018), 3, pp. 354–366, here p. 364.

ditions. Paradoxically, it seems that perpetrator studies move us away from the perpetrators themselves towards the contexts they are operating within.

Colchester

Felix Schnell

Katarzyna Matul: De la résistance à l'autonomie. L'affiche polonaise face au réalisme socialiste, 1944–1954. (Politique et échanges culturels, Bd. 522.) Alphil. Neuchâtel 2023. 200 S. ISBN 978-2-88930-480-6. (€ 22,–.)

This book monograph (based on a PhD thesis) about posters made in Poland between 1944 and 1954 seeks to explain why there was a boom in the production of this type of art during this period. The book offers the explanation chronologically, starting with favorable conditions in the inter-war period, the frequent use of posters by the underground movement during World War II, to the establishment of dedicated workshops (in Lublin under Soviet tutelage and in Łódź) in the early post-war period. But for Katarzyna Matul the major factor was the massive investment in movie posters in the second half of the 1940s. The state-sponsored cinema organization “Film Polski” took the important decision not to simply reproduce foreign posters, but to create its own; it was thanks to cinema that the poster industry really took off, as illustrated by the examples of the poster for *Citizen Kane* (released in Poland in 1948) and for the French movie *La Symphonie Pastorale* in 1947. Here there was a real artistic interest, which M. analyzes well: the project was to make posters that were different from the “American style,” which the Polish artists considered “bad taste” and, implicitly, to make posters that also veered away from the Soviet examples. The ambition to forge a “Polish style” in this field motivated the artists.

The book references interesting unpublished and unknown documents, such as a stenogram of a debate in 1951 at the Zachęta National Gallery (preserved at the National Museum in Poznań in the collection of the artist Szymon Bojko, the author of the 1972 book *Polski plakat współczesny*). The stenogram shows different expectations surrounding the poster art, but all interlocutors shared the aim of creating a unique and successful product.

Three main points can be discussed. Firstly, posters for movies about the Holocaust raise questions about the connection between poster art and the postwar memory politics. This is the case with Wanda Jakubowska's film *Ostatni etap*, whose poster depicts a broken flower put against the backdrop of a concentration camp uniform. The poster was judged by some to be formalist, which led to a discussion about what formalism meant (a recurrent question at the time). Another film that gave rise to controversy is *Ulica Graniczna*, a re-enactment of the Warsaw ghetto and the 1943 uprising; in this case, the debate set director Aleksander Ford against the poster artist Eryk Lipiński and focused on the appropriateness of showing “figures burning in destroyed houses.” These interesting cases raise the question about the ways we connect the history of the poster and the history of the visual memory of the Shoah in Poland. This question links the book to the 2023 exhibition *Pomniki oporu: Sztuka wobec powstania w getcie warszawskim (1943–1956)* (Monuments of Resistance: Art and the Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto), dedicated to the visualization of the Shoah, which took place at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw.

Secondly, M.'s hesitations surrounding the word “socialist realism” can be questioned. The author states in her introduction that she wants to showcase creativity throughout the period 1944–1954. Still, the core of the book is based on a conventional chronological division. In 1944–1948 the poster format boomed, then it was interrupted in 1949–1953, to make a great comeback during de-Stalinization. The author associates the term “socialist realism” negatively, with the dark period of low creative output. This leads to an unresolved question whether posters from the 1944–1948 period functioned outside the realm of socialist realism. Or should we consider them as within the realm of socialist realism? This ambiguity reveals the persistent hesitation surrounding this very term, which continues to encumber researchers.