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Klaus-Michael MALLMANN, Bogdan MUSIAL (Hg.), *Genesis des Genozids. Polen 1939–1941*, Darmstadt (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft) 2004, 240 p. (Veröffentlichung der Forschungsstelle Ludwigsburg der Universität Stuttgart, 3), ISBN 3-534-18096-8, EUR 42,00.

This book is an anthology of papers that were delivered by German and Polish scholars at a conference in Ludwigsburg in September 2003, and made accessible with unusual and admirable speed to a wider readership through publication. Though the program was conceived as a joint venture, the German and Polish papers reflect the distinctly different concerns of the two scholarly communities.

The main thrust of the German papers is that the Nazi »war of destruction« in the east and its destructive policies of racial imperialism began not with Barbarossa in June 1941 but in Poland in September 1939, and that this has not been sufficiently appreciated in previous scholarship. Successive authors – Jochen BÖHLER, Dorothee WEITBRECHT, Klaus-Michael MALLMANN, and Martin CÜPPERS – document the criminal complicity in Nazi racial policies of key German organs of conquest and occupation – the Wehrmacht, Einsatzgruppen, Order Police, and Waffen-SS – during the Polish campaign. And two other German scholars – Michael ALBERTI and Volker RIESS – sketch out Nazi racial policy in the Warthegau and early killing of institutionalized patients in the territories of northern and western Poland annexed to the Third Reich. Collectively, these papers provide welcome synopses of the authors' recent or forthcoming longer monographs that represent the cutting edge of scholarship in Germany on the Nazi occupation of Poland. But for those who have read Alex Rossino's »Hitler Strikes Poland« published in the same year that the conference was held, the major interpretive thrust of the German papers, namely that the invasion and occupation of Poland in many ways anticipated the »war of destruction« against the Soviet Union, will not surprise.

The Polish contributions focus not on German policies and institutions but rather on the impact of the parallel Nazi and Soviet occupations on Polish society. Taking a comparative approach, both Bogdan MUSIAL and Jacek Andrzej MLYNARCZYK conclude that the reign of terror of the Soviets – much more experienced in carrying out mass executions and mass deportations as well as in setting up systems of informants and collaborators and exploiting the mentality of resentful minorities – in the east was vastly more efficient than that of the as yet »dilettantish« and »unprofessional« Nazis in the west.

The most fascinating parts of the book are the attempts of Musial, Mlynarczyk, and in greatest detail Marek WIERZBICKI (who focuses especially on western Byelorussia or the Kresy) to deal with the sensitive and complex topic of Jewish-Polish relations in eastern Poland under the impact of Stalinist occupation and sovietization. Fortunately, rather than repeating the uncritical approach of simply asserting the old accusation that »the Jews« welcomed and collaborated with the Soviets, and then citing the reports and testimonies of all those contemporaries who firmly believed this accusation as proof of its validity, these scholars take a major step forward by examining the historical context within which a »misinterpretation« (*Mißdeutung*) about the Jewish role could become so pervasive and intense that all Jews became a »scapegoat« for the sins of the Soviets and thus subjected to an explosion of hatred and revenge in the summer of 1941. All three scholars note that Poles were double victims of the Soviet occupation that aimed at »depolonization« and social revolution. Poles were displaced and persecuted as both the dominant nationality and the dominant social elites. The Soviets successfully mobilized the past resentments and hopes for new opportunities of the non-Polish minorities, including Jews, to the »surprise« of Poles who had been oblivious to minority discontents and were now outraged at their lack of loyalty to the Polish state. Shocked and traumatized by their own suffering, Poles could not process that Jewish property owners were dispossessed as »class enemies«, that Jewish religious and political organizations were closed, and that some 18% of the deportees to Siberia

(65 500 out of 369 000 according to Musial's figures) were Jews. What was branded indelibly into their consciousness was that Jews »greeted« the Red Army, served in the revolutionary militia, held positions in the new government, nationalized economy, and education system, and helped the Soviet police arrest and deport Poles.

All three scholars note that certain segments of the Jewish population were beneficiaries of the Soviet occupation in terms of employment and social mobility, especially the hitherto professionally-disadvantaged Jewish intelligentsia, youth, and working class, and that Jewish hostility to the Polish state was understandable. Wierzbicki in particular argues that this understandable Jewish hostility and behavior in turn provided »concrete grounds« for Polish hostility toward Jews, even if the consequence was an unjustified generalization and simplification in the form of the Judeo-Bolshevik stereotype and the »myth« of »Jewish treason«.

Mentioned in passing but not given nearly enough prominence in my opinion was the obvious fact that, regardless of the resulting economic and professional benefits to some Jews and the persecution of others, virtually *all* Jews had to »welcome« the arrival of the Red Army, for it rescued them from the alternative that loomed before September 17, namely the imminent arrival of the Wehrmacht. Poles then and Polish historians now might deem the Soviet occupation an even greater horror than that of the Nazis, but so incommensurate and asymmetrical were the relative vulnerabilities of Poles and Jews that no Pole, then or now, should have expected Jews to have shared that judgment. How incommensurate can be seen from one example. Musial notes that deportation to Siberia was the greatest trauma experienced by eastern Poles. He does not add that for Jews, this was the greatest stroke of luck that could have befallen them, as they were the only large group of Polish Jews to survive the war relatively intact. What for Poles was an unmitigated horror was for Jews salvation.

I find the attempt of these Polish scholars to examine the issue of Jewish-Polish relations in eastern Poland in a critical, non-apologetic manner quite laudable. One other important difference in perspective should be noted, however. The Polish historians tend to see September 1939, that is the Soviet invasion, the ensuing policies of »ethnic decomposition« and manipulation, and especially the Jewish response, as the crucial point at which traditional religious, economic, and cultural antisemitism blended with the new Judeo-Bolshevik accusation to produce the lethal combination that exploded in the summer of 1941. In Jewish memory, of course, the timetable is somewhat different. For Jewish survivors from Poland, the death of Pilsudski and the official antisemitic policies of the successor regime – legitimizing discrimination against and despoliation of Jews and foreseeing the ultimate departure through emigration of this unwanted minority deemed alien to Poland as the long-term solution to the »Jewish question« – signaled a significant intensification and change in character of Polish antisemitism. For this point of view, therefore, many of the reports and testimonies of Polish witnesses in the fall of 1939 should not be seen as evidence that reliably describes Jewish behavior but rather as evidence of antisemitic bias in the eyes of the beholders. Wierzbicki does attempt to use Soviet and Jewish sources as well, and indeed notes that Soviet documents are much less clear about the alleged »omnipresence« of Jews in the Soviet occupation apparatus than Polish testimonies. In my opinion, this is a fundamental methodological issue that begs further treatment.

Christopher R. BROWNING, Chapel Hill