

Daniel Brewing, *Im Schatten von Auschwitz. Deutsche Massaker an polnischen Zivilisten 1939–1945*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2016, 363 pp., Veröffentlichungen der Forschungsstelle Ludwigsburg der Universität Stuttgart, vol. 29, edited by Martin Cüppers and Klaus-Michael Mallmann

It is usually the *Kwartalnik Historyczny*'s editorial board that gives a copy of a book to someone to write a review of it. This time it was different. Having found Daniel Brewing's work praised in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*,<sup>1</sup> I asked the journal's editors to assign it to me, to inform the Polish reader of what I consider to be a clear accomplishment of German historiography. Presenting the book seemed all the more justified once I read it and realized that it was inspired by Richard C. Lukas's *The Forgotten Holocaust. The Poles under German Occupation 1939–1944*, published thirty years ago in the USA.<sup>2</sup> The titles of both works *Im Schatten von Auschwitz* and *The Forgotten Holocaust* indicate that the authors' interest lay not in the extermination of the Jewish population but in the lesser-known ordeal of the Poles, not covered by the Nuremberg Laws.

Brewing is well-equipped to carry out his scholarly undertaking. In the years 2008–09 he completed a fellowship at the German Historical Institute operating for years in Warsaw. Having mastered the language, he was able to be-

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<sup>1</sup> Holger Thünemann, 'Von Warschau nach Westerland. Deutsche Massaker an polnischen Zivilisten während des Zweiten Weltkrieges', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13 December 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Richard C. Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust. The Poles under German Occupation 1939–1944*, Lexington, 1986. Brewing admits that this book's author deserves credit for being the first to provide the western audience with an account of Polish suffering (p. 29). The Polish edition: Richard C. Lukas, *Zapomniany holokaust*.

come acquainted with Polish archive materials and Polish academic literature and to establish contacts with Polish scholars specializing in the history of the Second World War and German occupation. In addition to his research in Poland, he also had the opportunity to work at the Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Paris Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah.

*Im Schatten von Auschwitz* is a published version of the dissertation he defended at the University of Stuttgart in 2014. The work was written under the supervision of the distinguished scholar Klaus-Michael Mallmann, with a particular competence in this field. Brewing had made his scholarly debut with a work published three years earlier in Polish. He works now at the Technische Hochschule in Aachen.

With regard to the primary sources on which the work is based, I would like to emphasize especially the Polish source materials, of which the author has made thorough use, and records by the occupation authorities and of the post-war trials of war criminals, held in German archives. The multilingual bibliography and the author's command of Polish literature are impressive.

Concerned predominantly with the years 1939–45, the most tragic chapter in the history of Polish-German relations, Brewing's work also covers an earlier period, and rightly so. In my opinion he is right to contend that in terms of growing enmity between the two nations a turning point came in 1848.<sup>3</sup> As a student of national stereotypes, I consider the information pertaining to the image of 'the Pole' created by the Germans to be particularly valuable. It reflects not only this enmity, but also a disdain and sense of cultural superiority with which the Poles were perceived in Germany. Most Polish readers may be unfamiliar, with an excellent book by Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius *Kriegsland im Osten. Eroberung, Kolonisierung und Militärherrschaft im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Hamburg, 2002), which Brewing uses to cite German soldiers' opinions about the Poles and Poland (p. 49). Thus, we learn what the future General Heinz Guderian wrote to his wife in a letter dated 24 May 1919. He first called the Poles barbarians and then enumerated their national 'traits'. The Poles, referred to in the letter as paupers, scruffs and fools, were in his opinion untalented, immoral and insidious (p. 58). The scorn which the Germans held for their eastern neighbours, 'a nation that needs a whip above its head to feel well and safe', can also be found in Claus von Stauffenberg's letters to his wife from the September of 1939.<sup>4</sup>

According to Germans of the time, it was insidiousness that especially typified the Poles, constituting the most distinctive trait of the Polish national character. The word *heimtückisch* that appears in Guderian's letter is used in

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<sup>3</sup> See Tomasz Szarota, '18–19 marca 1848 r. w Berlinie. Na tropach legendy o Polakach "fabrykantach rewolucji"', in *Losy Polaków w XIX–XX w. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Stefanowi Kieniewiczowi w osiemdziesiątą rocznicę Jego urodzin*, ed. Barbara Grochulska and Jerzy Skowronek, Warsaw, 1987, pp. 465–82.

<sup>4</sup> See Peter Hoffmann, *Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg und seine Brüdern*, Stuttgart, 2004, p. 189.

German along with the synonymous *hinterlistig*. It is quite typical that SS Gruppenführer and Generalleutnant Waffen SS Heinz Reinefarth used both words in referring to the Poles as a ‘cruel enemy using insidious and deceitful methods of fighting’<sup>5</sup> on 5 November 1944 — one month after the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising. In his analysis of the way in which the Germans fought the Polish resistance movement, including the Polish guerrilla units, Brewing often cites German documents in which Polish partisans are referred to by the word *Heckenschützen*, that is ‘shooting from behind the bushes’ (in Polish we would say ‘from round the corner’). It may come as a surprise that the strong criticism raised a few years ago by the ZDF film *Generation War* (origin. Germ. *Unsere Mütter, unsere Väter*, dir. by Philipp Kadelbach) focused mainly on the anti-Semitism of which Polish partisans were accused, and not at all on the partisans’ involvement in attempts to ambush German soldiers, a practice likely to be viewed by the Germans as dishonourable.

The book under review consists of a comprehensive, forty-page-long preface and three parts divided into twelve chapters. In addition to discussion of primary sources and secondary literature, the preface provides a justification for using the term ‘Massaker’ which appears in the work’s subtitle. The author associates ‘massacre’ with the slaughter of defenceless animals. However he rejects the term ‘genocide’, since in his opinion all cases of mass murder of non-resistant civilians who fall victim to the principle and practice of a collective responsibility, should be considered in relation to the specific spatio-temporal circumstances in which they took place. The first part (pp. 41–128) concerns itself with analysing the process of growing enmity between the two nations, beginning with the Spring of Nations, through to the Great War and the inter-war period. Regarding the latter, the author deals with what he calls the Polish-German co-operation of the years 1934–38.<sup>6</sup> His attention is also drawn to ‘horror propaganda’ and its continuation in September of 1939 and the first months of German occupation. In a form of preparation for the war, it consisted of accusing the Poles of a policy of terror against members of the German minority in Poland. This section of the work contains a fragment devoted to the ‘bloody Bydgoszcz Sunday’ (Bromberger Blutsonntag).<sup>7</sup> The second part of the work is the most lengthy and the most important one. Entitled “‘Polnische Banden’ — Krieg, Be-

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<sup>5</sup> The author’s attention was drawn to the text published in *Ostdeutscher Beobachter* by Dieter Pohl. If I am not mistaken this statement by Reinefarth has never been cited in Polish literature.

<sup>6</sup> The author cites in this context the book by Karina Pryt, *Befohlene Freundschaft. Die deutsch-polnischen Kulturbeziehungen 1934–1939* (Osnabrück, 2010), but fails to refer to works by a distinguished expert on the topic Bogusław Drewniak: *Polen und Deutschland 1919–1939. Wege und Irrwege kultureller Zusammenarbeit*, Düsseldorf, 1999 and idem, *Polsko-niemieckie zблиżenia w kręgu kultury 1919–1939*, Gdańsk, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> I do not understand why the author has failed to make use of a massive volume of 885 pages, *Bydgoszcz 3–4 września 1939*, ed. Tomasz Chinciński and Paweł Machcewicz, Warsaw, 2008.

satzungspolitik und die Logik der Massaker' (pp. 129–290), it provides an account of the activity of German self-defence units (Selbstschutz), armed detachments made up of members of Poland's German minority that supported the occupier's policy of terror.<sup>8</sup> A separate chapter is devoted to the German operations targeting the detachment led by Major Henryk Dobrzański, alias 'Hubal' (the first Polish partisan leader, active in the years 1939–40) and the bloody repression the Germans consequently inflicted on the civilian population (pp. 173–93). Further sections of the text concern the fighting against Polish partisan troops across 1942–44 and the bloody suppression of the Warsaw Uprising, including crimes committed against the city's non-combatants.

The third part (pp. 291–326) offers a critical account of how West German society dealt with the Nazi past and the German justice system's treatment of war criminals who were West German citizens. Quite telling in this context are the several-year proceedings carried out against a perpetrator of the murder of village inhabitants from the Lublin region in the Spring of 1940. SS Hauptsturmführer Friedrich Paulus stood five trials in the West Germany. His defence attorneys alternately tried to convince the court that the defendant had acted in retaliation for crimes committed by the Poles, or called for a dismissal of charges on due to expiration of the limitation period. Paulus escaped punishment by release in 1987 (pp. 306–11).

It is not my intention to summarize this excellent book, nor would it be possible here. My goal is to signal some of the issues it raises, and to point out some of the defects it suffers. Of particular value is in my opinion the author's exposition of the role played in the German occupation apparatus by former members of the paramilitary Freikorps units, established in 1918 and involved, among other activities, in fighting Silesian insurgents. The author mentions the Higher SS and the Police Leader in General Government, Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger and Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski czy Ludolf von Alvensleben respectively. The latter is credited with the saying: 'I don't like my breakfast if I haven't killed twenty Poles stone dead first' (p. 96). To these names one can add Erich Koch and the commandant of Auschwitz concentration camp Rudolf Höss. I have already mentioned that a topic dealt with in the book are the Selbstschutz voluntary units, created in September 1939 by German citizens of Poland and supporting the German invasion. The author's strength as a researcher lies especially in his ability to thoroughly reconstruct specific events. In order to show the nature of the Selbstschutz units and the role they played in the extermination of the Polish civilian population, he begins with an account of events that took place in the village of

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<sup>8</sup> It is worth mentioning that interest in Selbstschutz units appeared almost simultaneously in Poland and in Germany, see Tomasz Ceran, 'Zapomniani kaci Hitlera. Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz w Polsce w 1939 r. Stan badań i potrzeby badawcze', in *Polska pod okupacją 1939–1945*, Warsaw, 2015–, vol. 1, ed. Marek Gańczowski et al., pp. 301–20, and idem, *Volksdeutscher Selbstschutz w okupowanej Polsce*, Bydgoszcz and Gdańsk, 2016.

Józefów on 13 April 1940 — a criminal assault in which German settlers, the Kassner family of five, were murdered by Poles. In subsequent retaliatory action Germans, led by Avlensleben, killed 161 innocent people from the surrounding area, despite the perpetrators of the assault having been captured by the Blue Police, a formation composed of Poles, but under German command (pp. 102–04).

I was surprised by the author's remark that the Germans used lessons learned in Poland to fight the French Resistance (p. 33).<sup>9</sup> We can thank Brewing for contributing to the debate on 'Judenjagd', which has continued for several years. As Brewing reminds us, it was opened by Christopher Browning who referred to the hunt for Jews in Poland as the final phase of *Endlösung* in his 2006 article published in Germany.<sup>10</sup> Five years later two books supporting his thesis appeared in Poland, one by Jan Grabowski and the other by Barbara Engelking.<sup>11</sup> However, while these authors blame anti-Semitism and the desire for wealth for causing Poles to join the hunt for Jews, Brewing attributes a causative role to the occupation authorities who sought to use Polish peasants to fight all forms of resistance. In his opinion, several factors stood behind this 'cooperation' with the occupier: submission to the repeated calls from the Nazi authorities, the use of coercion, rewards offered for denouncing hidden Jews and the fear of punishment for failing to follow the occupier's orders (pp. 216–24). The author also contributes to the ongoing debate on the Red Army's withholding support for the Warsaw Uprising. Following Karl-Heinz Frieser,<sup>12</sup> he points to Field Marshal Walter Model's counter-offensive, the defeat suffered by the Soviets in the tank battle at the River Vistula, as the main factor that determined the Red Army's conduct (p. 271). In the book's conclusion, Brewing modifies Polish scholarly findings regarding the number of civilians murdered by the Germans in actions taken against 'criminal bands'. While Waław Długoborski and Czesław Madajczyk estimated the number of victims at 4,000 and almost 20,000 respectively, Brewing raises it to between 35–40,000.

Concluding this review I would like to offer a few critical remarks. First of all, the author failed to make use of the work by Karol Marian Pospieszalski (1909–

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<sup>9</sup> The author draws here on Peter Lieb's findings presented in the article 'Repression of Eastern Front Experience on Anti-Partisan Warfare in France 1943–1944', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 31, 2008, 5, pp. 797–823.

<sup>10</sup> Christopher Browning, '“Judenjagd”. Die Schlussphase der “Endlösung” in Polen', in *Deutsche, Juden, Völkermord*, ed. Jürgen Matthäus and Klaus-Michael Mallmann, Darmstadt, 2008, pp. 177–89.

<sup>11</sup> Jan Grabowski, *Judenjagd. Polowanie na Żydów. Studium dziejów pewnego powiatu*, Warsaw, 2011, and Barbara Engelking, *Jest taki piękny, słoneczny dzień. Losy Żydów szukających ratunku na wsi polskiej 1942–1945*, Warsaw, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> The author cites his text: 'Ein zweites “Wunder an der Weichsel”? Die Panzerschlacht vor Warschau im August 1944 und ihre Folgen', in *Der Warschauer Aufstand 1944. Ereignis und Wahrnehmung in Polen und Deutschland*, ed. Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, Eugeniusz Cezary Król and Michael Thomae, Paderborn, 2011, pp. 45–46.

2007) *Sprawa 58000 'Volksdeutschów'*, essential to the topic dealt with in his book. (Pospieszalski exposed German lies regarding the number of Germans murdered in Poland in 1939).<sup>13</sup> It would be advisable to include in analysis of human losses suffered by Poland during the Second World War the volume *Polska 1939–1945. Straty osobowe i ofiary represji pod dwiema okupacjami*<sup>14</sup> published by the Institute of National Remembrance. Worth noting among works on the 'image of enemy' is in my opinion my study offering an analysis of the image of the Pole in German caricature from the years 1914–44.<sup>15</sup> Although the author refers to the burning of dead bodies in recounting crimes committed against Warsaw's civilian population during the Uprising (p. 285), he fails to link this with 'Aktion 1005' launched to cover up the crimes in question.<sup>16</sup>

I have no hesitation in proposing the translation of Daniel Brewing's book and the preparation of a Polish edition. It will serve as a great antidote for the Germanophobia that appears in Polish society today.

Tomasz Szarota  
(Warsaw)

(Translated by Artur Mękowski)  
(Proofreading by Yelizaveta Crofts)

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<sup>13</sup> Karol M. Pospieszalski, *Sprawa 58000 „Volksdeutschów”*. *Sprostowanie hitlerowskich oszczerstw w sprawie strat niemieckiej mniejszości w Polsce w ostatnich miesiącach przed wybuchem wojny i w toku kampanii wrześniowej*, Poznań, 1959. It was the seventh volume of the series *Documenta Occupationis*. Two collections of documents edited by the same accomplished scholar on the Nazi occupation law in Poland D. Brewing included in his bibliography. Pospieszalski has recently been recalled by a German historian Jochen Böhrer, 'Nur ein Leben als ob', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 October 2017. It is a powerful article recounting the fate of Poles and Poland during the Second World War.

<sup>14</sup> *Polska 1939–1945. Straty osobowe i ofiary represji pod dwiema okupacjami*, ed. Wojciech Materski and Tomasz Szarota, Warsaw, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Tomasz Szarota, 'Der Pole in der deutschen Karikatur (1914–1944). Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung nationaler Stereotype', in 'Nachbarn sind der Rede wert'. *Bilder der Deutschen von Polen und der Polen von Deutschen in der Neuzeit*, ed. Johannes Hoffmann, Dortmund, 1997, pp. 69–102.

<sup>16</sup> See Jens Hoffmann, 'Das kann man nicht erzählen'. *AKTION 1005 — Wie die Nazis die Spuren ihrer Massenmorde in Osteuropa beseitigten*, Hamburg, 2008; See also my text 'Die "Aktion 1005" in Warschau. Leichenverbrennung — Verwischen der Spuren begangener Verbrechen', in Tomasz Szarota, *Stereotype und Konflikte. Historische Studien zu den deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen*, Osnabrück, 2010, pp. 369–78.