

## No Anonymous Desk-Murderers

Bogdan Musial, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung und Judenverfolgung im Generalgouvernement. Eine Fallstudie zum Distrikt Lublin 1939-1944*

(Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999), xi + 433 pp.

Reviewed by

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Who set the stage for the murder of the Jews during the Holocaust? Who participated in the murder? To what extent were the participants in the murder willful perpetrators? To what extent were they anonymous bureaucrats doing their small part, or low-ranking field officials following orders?

These are among the questions that have concerned historians for many years. However, research published during the last decade has shown conclusively in every case examined to date that the participants in the murder were generally both willful and knowing. Thus, whether it was Reserve Police Battalion 101, the SS in Lublin, the SS and civilian authorities in Galicia, Eichmann's staff,<sup>1</sup> or other cases that have been and are being examined by researchers in Germany and elsewhere, a pattern has emerged. The growing number of case studies of particular units or regions has shown that the Germans and Austrians involved in the murder of the Jews knew exactly what they were doing, and "they did it because they wanted to do it."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See for example, Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men; Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992); Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners; Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Knopf, 1996); Dieter Pohl, *Von der "Judenpolitik" zum Judenmord. Der Distrikt Lublin des Generalgouvernements 1939-1944* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1993); *idem*, *Nationalsozialistischer Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941-1944. Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996); Thomas Sandkühler, *"Endlösung" in Galizien; Der Judenmord in Ostpolen und die Rettungsinitiativen von Berthold Beitz 1941-1944* (Bonn: Dietz, 1996); Hans Safrian, *Eichmann und seine Gehilfen* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1995); Yaacov Lozowick, *Hitler's Bürokraten* (Zurich: Pendo, 2000).

<sup>2</sup>The quote has been attributed to historian Raul Hilberg by philosopher Emil Fackenheim from a conversation during a 1975 conference, in response to the latter's question, "Why did they do it?" Fackenheim related it to this reviewer in numerous conversations, October 1981 – July 1987.

Bogdan Musial's book, *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung und Judenverfolgung im Generalgouvernement; Eine Fallstudie zum Distrikt Lublin 1939-1944*, is a welcome contribution to this growing literature. He has undertaken to examine the civilian administration of the Lublin district of the *Generalgouvernement* (GG), and the results of his extensive and in-depth research are noteworthy. Most of the research dealing with the murder of the Jews in the *Generalgouvernement* has focused on the SS and on the death camps in this region – Belżec, Sobibór, Treblinka, and Majdanek.<sup>3</sup> Dieter Pohl was the first to devote a book to the Lublin district.<sup>4</sup> However, whereas Pohl's excellent book was based on his masters' thesis, Musial's is based on his doctoral dissertation, meeting the more rigorous demands implied thereby. Musial also benefited from access to archives that were not yet open when Pohl did his original Lublin research.

The foci of the two books, therefore, are different, though complementary. Pohl focuses on the SS and police in the Lublin district and their role in framing and implementing Jewish policy and "Operation Reinhard." Although he cites Pohl extensively for certain parts of the story, Musial comes to different conclusions from the point of view of his concentration on the civilian administration. For example, whereas Pohl sees the SS as decisive in Jewish policy in the Lublin district from very early on, Musial sees the civilian administration as having the upper hand in the first two years of German rule. Yet at the root of their disagreements on various interpretations, there is also quite a bit of agreement, as in the willfulness and cooperation of the various German authorities during the murder. The result is generally complementary analyses and conclusions based on a great deal of shared information.

Musial demonstrates conclusively that the civilian administration of the GG, and especially of the Lublin district, had an important role to play in all anti-Jewish policies, including the murder. Individuals and governmental departments that might otherwise escape our attention are here brought into focus, and this focus is telling. For not only did the civilian bureaucrats in the Lublin district know about the official policy regarding the Jews, but they were

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<sup>3</sup>See, for example, Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka; The Operation Reinhard Death Camps* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983).

<sup>4</sup>See Pohl, Von der "Judenpolitik."

also among its most important framers and implementers. Like their SS and police counterparts, they, too, were willing, knowing, and active participants in the persecution and then in the murder of Polish Jewry.

It took several months for the civilian administration of the *Generalgouvernement* to become fully manned and operational after its official inception on October 26, 1939. From the beginning there were contentious relations between *Generalgouverneur* Hans Frank and his civilian authorities, on the one hand, and Friedrich Wilhelm Krüger, the HSSPF (*Höhere SS- und Polizei Führer*, or Higher SS and Police Commander) of the GG and his staff, on the other. They jockeyed for authority in many policy areas, including Jewish policy. Frank had no authority over the SS or police, and this rankled him, as the SS pursued independent policies that affected all of the *Generalgouvernement*.

One of the main points of contention, Musial notes, was resettlements. Himmler had plans for a major demographic reordering of Central and Eastern Europe, and this involved moving millions of people. As part of these grandiose schemes, some 460,000 Poles were deported from the German-annexed eastern Polish territories to the GG between the autumn of 1939 and early 1941. Frank opposed these resettlements for logistic, administrative, and sovereign reasons. These masses of refugees disrupted the smooth running of the GG and infringed upon his authority.

Within his introductory comments on this issue, Musial reveals one of the great strengths of this book – as well as one of its weaknesses. Musial has examined a wealth of documentation in Poland and Germany, much of it never before addressed so thoroughly by historians. In this case, early in the book (p.29), the reader encounters the significance of the *Bevölkerungswesen und Fürsorge* (BuF; Population and Welfare) department of the GG, and then the same department in the Lublin district. Musial takes advantage of the many statistics accumulated by this department, which, among its other duties, was responsible for keeping track of the GG population. As Musial so effectively shows throughout the book, within the German civilian regime in the GG and in Lublin, the BuF played a central role in planning and implementing anti-Jewish policy. Musial has combed the vast Lublin

governor's archive (most of it housed in the state archive in Lublin) and has done a commendable job of analyzing and synthesizing the material. If he had engaged in no analysis whatsoever, he would already have done a service to historians merely by highlighting the BuF material.

As Musial correctly points out with regard to the resettlements, the 460,000 "resettled" Poles included tens of thousands of Jews. But were these Jews deported as Poles, as Musial intimates? Musial is generally clear in the book that German anti-Jewish policy was specifically that – anti-Jewish. But at the same time, a basic, underlying perception that Poles and Jews were treated more or less the same and were destined to suffer the same fate creeps in repeatedly throughout the book.

The question of Nazi long-range plans for Poles (and Slavs in general) is an important one about which there is a body of literature and differences of opinion among scholars. Yet Musial does not enter the discussion by devoting a thorough chapter to this question. Thus, his periodic and unsubstantiated lumping of German anti-Polish policy with their anti-Jewish policy is awkwardly out of step with the rest of the book, which has such a strong documentary foundation.

The book has three main sections: on the structure and functions of the civilian administration of the *Generalgouvernement* in general and the Lublin district in particular; on the anti-Jewish policy of the civilian administration in Lublin in 1939-1941; and on the role of the civilian administration in Lublin in organizing "Operation Reinhard." An interesting appendix provides brief biographies of fifty civilian officials discussed in the book.

Musial shows the gradual development of the civilian administration, both in its central government in Kraków and in its district governments in Warsaw, Kraków, Radom, and Lublin. He attributes the somewhat slower development of the civilian administration in Lublin mainly to two factors: the presence of the Red Army in the eastern and southern parts of the district, until approximately October 10; and the replacement of the first governor of the Lublin district, Friedrich Schmidt, with Ernst Zörner in February 1940. This gave the SS in Lublin an advantage in the competition for power, especially in light of the fact that the district SSPF was Odilo Globocnik.

Frank's civilian government in Kraków had twelve departments, and the GG's four administrative districts operated with more or less the same departments on a district level. Musial's thorough explanation of the administrative structure of the GG lays the foundation for one of his main conclusions: the day-to-day policy toward the Jews was decentralized to a large degree, and the *Kreishauptleute* (county chiefs) and *Stadthauptleute* (city chiefs) within the districts had much freedom of action. In order to understand the development and implementation of German policy toward the Jews in the GG, then, we must examine the BuF and the *Kreishauptleute*. This Musial does, and, indeed, one of his main contributions is in delving into this civilian apparatus. He examines the inter-relations between Frank's central regime and the Lublin district regime, and between the district's central regime and its *Kreise* (counties) administrations.

In the first part of the book, we already meet most of the main characters that feature in this civilian administration. Musial reveals that the GG and Lublin German civil service included many qualified people. For example, of twenty-three staff people in the Ernährungs- und Landwirtschaft (Food and Agriculture) Department, seven had Ph.Ds, and two had professional diplomas in the field. Of sixty staff members in the district labor department in October 1939, fifteen were high-ranking civil servants (p. 81). Yet at the same time, many of them were sent by their government ministries in Berlin to the GG because they were problematic workers in the eyes of their superiors. Moreover, these professional civil servants constituted only a small fraction of the GG government bureaucracy and were augmented by a variety of opportunists, professionals, people looking to rehabilitate their reputations, party members receiving cushy jobs, ideologically motivated Nazis, and so on. Top quality officials tended to look upon a job in the GG as undesirable, particularly in Lublin, which was viewed as uncultured and monotonous. The low quality of many of these civil servants in the GG also led the top officials to lower their expectations of them. They turned a blind eye to minor infractions and mediocre job performance, leaving men of doubtful quality in their posts. For example, Musial cites the case of Josef Ackermann, who was sent to Lublin bearing a previous conviction. He was assigned to the German

municipal regime in Lublin, and then, because of repeated property crimes, he was reassigned to Hrubieszów and put in charge, ironically, of the Treuhandverwaltung (expropriating Jewish property). When the central GG government in Kraków wanted to punish him in 1942, the Lublin personnel department interceded to leave him in his post since there was no one to replace him. He remained there until the German retreat in 1944 (pp. 84-85). It is, therefore, even more telling when Musial points out that, not only did the ranks of the *Kreishauptleute*, the pillars of the German administration, include any number of such dubious officials, but also the fate of the occupied peoples depended to a large degree on who their *Kreishauptmann* was (pp. 92-94). Thus, conditions for Jews in Biłgoraj county were not as bad as in Puławy county, because Werner Ansel did not like ghettos or similar extreme measures, while Adolf Brandt sought all ways to constrict, confine, and evict the Jews.

One of the most important officials we meet is Richard Türk, head of the BuF in Lublin from January 1940 to April 1942, when he moved to the central government in Kraków. Musial shows that Türk was an intensely antisemitic, confirmed Nazi. It was Türk, together with his deputy Fritz Reuter, who ultimately was one of the main organizers of the deportations of the Jews to Bełżec at the start of Operation Reinhard.

Musial strikes a distinction in the approach to anti-Jewish policy: where the SS were “visionary,” the civilians were practical. Where Globocnik developed grand schemes, the civilians tried to facilitate a solution to the “Jewish Question” by means of a series of functional measures. With both feet on the ground, so to speak, and with administrative experience, the county officials were able to use the authority over the Judenräte delegated to them by Frank in order to outflank the SS for some measure of influence over anti-Jewish policy. The SS had neither the manpower nor the expertise to run the day-to-day affairs of the Jews on the local level, unless it was in the large cities, where SS forces were concentrated. Thus, much of what constituted local policy regarding the Jews, until the end of 1941, was in the hands of the German local authorities – whether it be isolation, ghettoization, property and business expropriation, or much of the forced labor.

The author's analysis goes further to argue that the civilians had the upper hand overall in anti-Jewish policy in this period. However, this might not be as clear-cut as he indicates. For example, whereas the SS's mid-August 1940 raids to grab Jews for forced labor may have been part of a labor "fiasco" (p. 166), in that many of those seized and their SS supervisors were inappropriate for the job, it was also a display of Globocnik's ruthlessness and independence. These traits impressed Himmler favorably and probably influenced his later choice of Globocnik to head "Operation Reinhard." Moreover, many thousands of Jews suffered terribly during this forced labor in the vicinity of Belzec; many died, while others returned home permanently maimed. This reflects SS power, not weakness vis-à-vis the civilian authorities. However, these Jews' bitter experience and what light it might shed on our understanding of this power struggle are subjects that Musial barely discusses.

Musial believes that Frank played an important role in the discussions that led to the murder of the Jews in the *Generalgouvernement*. He demonstrates this by juxtaposing certain documents that have long been common knowledge among historians, such as Frank's December 16, 1941, speech before senior GG officials, with others that are relatively new or less known, such as Frank's meetings in Berlin and Lublin on October 14 and 17, 1941, respectively, and Himmler's meeting with Hitler on December 13, at which the murder of the Jews was discussed (pp. 193-200). When put into the context of the developments in decision-making regarding the Jews and Frank's contacts with these decisions, Frank's blunt comments to his senior GG officials, on December 16, regarding the murder take on a different light. Frank's meeting later that day with his Interior Minister Westerkamp, Globocnik, Zörner, and other senior officials, reflects the coordinated planning among the civilian government of the GG, the civilian government of the Lublin district, and the SS regarding "Operation Reinhard."

Another function of Frank's speech was to convince the unconvinced among his senior staff. By October 1941, Musial shows, most GG officials, SS, and police were unified in their opinion that the Jews needed to be killed, although their reasons were not identical. Whereas for Globocnik ideological

antisemitism was the decisive factor, for Frank and his officials war needs and antisemitism were equally important elements. For those who were not yet fully convinced, Frank launched into his speech on December 16.

Based on the above evidence and a series of memos and meetings from the same period, such as Globocnik's October 1 memo to Himmler regarding the Germanization of the Lublin district and the settlement of the *Volksdeutsche*, Musial dates the decision to murder the Jews of the *Generalgouvernement* to the first half of October 1941 (pp. 201-207).<sup>5</sup> While his documentary basis for this argument is rich, at the same time he ignores other analyses and evidence. Richard Breitman's argument that, during his July 17-21 visit to Lublin, Himmler ordered Globocnik to prepare the murder operation, based on an earlier decision in principle by Hitler, is completely ignored by Musial.<sup>6</sup> Yet there is also evidence to support Breitman's theory, such as the July 9 opening of the first stage of the Trawniki camp to train renegades from the Red Army to serve Globocnik. Musial's own argument would have been strengthened had he grappled with this and other opposing analyses and synthesized the evidence. Still, the decision to murder the Jews of the *Generalgouvernement* is not at the heart of the book; rather, it concentrates on the consensus with regard to the murder.

Musial shows that the civilian officials in Kraków and Lublin were still not fully informed even as the deportations were about to begin from Lublin on March 16/17, 1942, although they were in consensus with the SS. Still, the points of consensus and attempts at cooperation at this time seem far more significant – even more so than Musial seems to believe.

This consensus regarding the murder is reflected in the civilian initiatives undertaken in the Lublin district to deport and kill Jews. The coordination on the local level was mainly between the *Kreishauptmann* and Hermann Höfle's "Einsatzstab Reinhard" (Reinhard Operations Office). It was the county chiefs

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<sup>5</sup>Musial has developed this argument and analyzed Globocnik's role in the decision-making process in his article, "The Origins of 'Operation Reinhard': The Decision-Making Process for the Mass Murder of the Jews in the Generalgouvernement," *Yad Vashem Studies* 28 (2000), pp. 113-153.

<sup>6</sup>Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (New York: Knopf, 1991), pp. 152, 156, 184-190. Breitman's book is not even in Musial's bibliography. Musial surprisingly does not make use of Dieter Pohl's counter-argument to Breitman, although he cites Pohl extensively elsewhere; see Pohl, Von der "Judenpolitik," pp. 99-102.

who organized the registration of the Jews and of those who would be left alive temporarily as forced laborers. Indeed, given their close, hands-on contact with the implementation of policy, they were the most appropriate officials to organize deportations.

County chiefs initiated the deportations from Kazimierz Dolny, Wąwolnica, and Kraśnik in late March and April 1942 (pp. 237-241). They also took command of deportations in quite a few places. Musial cites the case of Otto Busse in Hrubieszów, who personally commanded the deportations from that town in June 1942, and sent his subordinates to run the deportations from other localities in the county (e.g., Belz, Dubienka, Uchanie, and Grabowiec). Busse informed the BuF in Lublin, on May 22, that he had 14,188 Jews to be deported. He ordered the freight cars for the transport to Sobibór; he ordered the Judenrat in Hrubieszów to have a certain number of Jews ready for deportation on June 1; he ordered the police into action (pp. 249-254). Busse's is the best-documented case of such prominent civilian German participation in the murder, but Musial cites many other cases where the documents indicate a similar level of participation.

Musial has effectively shown the active, even eager participation of civilian officials on all levels of the Lublin district – the governor's staff, the county staffs, the BuF staff, etc. No case has yet been uncovered of opposition to the murder. The only matter that worried them, apparently, was that the murder of those Jews deemed unfit for labor (the large majority) was progressing too slowly (p. 272).

Musial discusses the two phases to "Operation Reinhard": the first phase of murdering most Jews, while leaving skilled workers alive in reduced Jewish quarters; and the second phase, following Himmler's July 19, 1942, order to kill all but those necessary for the war effort, which focused on ghetto liquidation. Here the civilian authorities played a secondary support role to the SS, focusing largely on concentrating the Jews in a few localities so that they would be ripe for the taking. Yet this secondary role did not mean that the civilians did not take the initiative in brutality. For example, the remaining Jews in Biała-Podlaska county were force-marched to Międzyrzec in late September 1942, while the *Landkommissar* (rural chief) in Tomaszów

personally shot many Jews during the final round-ups (pp. 288-290). Moreover, the civilian officials played an active role in the hunt for Jews who had escaped. Whereas Globocnik and his staff were in charge of the hunts, the local German officials did much of the work, together with local Poles and Ukrainians.

The last sections of Musial's book give us an insight into the fate of the civilian officials who had participated in persecution and murder in the Lublin district. As the author notes, they escaped justice with far greater success than the Jews escaped their murderous clutches. Most of them were never tried, nor were they even pursued, and Musial's moral outrage is only thinly disguised. Not only were they not brought before the bar of justice, but also a number of these officials actually rose in the ranks of the postwar German judicial system. For example, Dr. Curt Engländer, *Stadthauptmann* of Lublin during the deportations to Bełżec, rose to president of the "Oberverwaltungsgericht" of Mainz, while Hartmut Gerstenhauer, *Kreishauptmann* for Krasnystaw, was director of the Sozialgericht in Schleswig in 1954. Musial provides dozens of illustrations of postwar success in order to make his point regarding the lack of justice for these perpetrators. Of all of these, three stand out in particular for this reviewer.

Much of Musial's research was conducted in the archive of the governor of the Lublin district. This archive was organized and preserved by the Lublin district's chief archivist, Dr. Roland Seeberg-Elverfeld. After the war he rose to a high-ranking civil-service position in the press and information office of the Federal Republic of Germany. Perhaps his archival success (he also removed the Lublin Judenrat archive to Kraków in 1944, thereby preserving that as well for researchers) stood him in good stead for his later advancement.

Claus Volkmann was a veteran Nazi and member of the SS. He had served in various capacities in the GG, including *Kreishauptmann* in Krasnystaw in 1941, after which he took the same position in Kolomea (Kołomyja; Galicia district, now Ukraine). In both counties he took the lead in many deportations of Jews – from Kolomea they were deported to Bełżec, where they were murdered. After serving as a foreign correspondent for prominent German newspapers after the war, Volkmann became a member of the council of an

organization called “Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker” (“Society for Endangered Peoples”). Did his record of endangering Jews provide the necessary experience for this post?

And then there is Richard Türk, one of the protagonists of this book. He became active in West German politics after the war, especially in fighting for the rights of Germans who had been expelled from other countries. Here, too, his wartime experience with moving large numbers of people, even to their deaths, seems to have qualified him.

Musial has made extensive use of German and Polish sources and has used Jewish sources to some extent. Among the Jewish primary sources he has consulted, one can find documents from the JUS archive,<sup>7</sup> a small amount from the “Oneg Shabbat” archive, and a number of survivor testimonies, all in the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, as well as some testimonies at trials in the Federal Republic of Germany. Yet the Lublin Judenrat archive, housed in the same state archive where much of the Lublin governor’s archive is kept, has not been addressed at all. Other available Jewish sources in Polish and German archives (not to mention Israeli and American) have also not been consulted. To what extent are such Jewish sources relevant to Musial’s discussion of the German civilian authorities in Lublin?

In his discussion of the creation of penal camps by the *Kreishauptleute* in their counties, Musial refers to the camp set up by the Hrubieszów *Kreishauptmann* in the town of Oszczów in 1940, which was moved to Werbkowice in the summer of 1941 (p. 53). This is based on the *Kreishauptmann*’s August 28, 1941, report to Zörner. However, the very same place appears in Jewish sources as a *hachsharah* (training) camp to which Zionist youth movements from Warsaw and other parts of the GG tried to send their members. There is evidence that the head of the Hrubieszów Judenrat tried to help at least one of these movements transfer its members to this site for agricultural training.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Jüdische Unterstützungshilfe, or Jewish Aid Center, which replaced the JSS – Jüdische Soziale Selbsthilfe (ŻSS in Polish) in October 1942. This was a German-recognized and closely watched Jewish social-welfare organization based in Kraków, which tried to reach all the GG.

<sup>8</sup>See for example, Israel Gutman, *The Jews of Warsaw 1939-1943* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), p. 140; *Ruth Zariz, Letters of Halutzim from Occupied Poland 1940-1944* (Hebrew) (Ramat Ef'al: Yad Tabenkin, 1994), pp. 81-82, 85-88; Abraham Lewin, *A Cup of*

Musial also discusses food rations for Jews and the *Kreishauptmann's* discretion to decrease rations. Yet he does not discuss if the official 1941 weekly rations of 700 g. bread, 50 g. sugar, 250 ml. milk, and other items were actually distributed and reached the Jews (p. 161). Jewish survivor testimony indicates that the rations in Lublin were actually much smaller.<sup>9</sup>

What exactly was the nature of the Werbkowice camp? What food rations did the Jews actually receive? How do we reconcile these conflicting records? These are questions worthy of discussion, but only an examination of a wider variety of sources can allow us even to raise them, let alone provide answers. And this goes back to the broader question – the ongoing discussion between scholars in Germany and Israel regarding how to approach research on the Holocaust.

Musial is very much a part of the German school of history that seeks to understand the perpetrators through their own documentation and testimony. Thus, the subject of the Judenräte is barely mentioned, and the head of the Lublin Judenrat, Henryk Bekker – or any other Judenrat head, for that matter – does not appear in the book at all. Marek Alten, Bekker's deputy, appears once, in connection with his second official function – head of the Lublin district's JSS branch.

The hunt for Jews who had fled to the forests is discussed briefly, as is the growing presence of partisans in these forests. However, the fact that the Jews constituted a significant percentage of the partisans and others in the forests is not mentioned. Nor is the controversial subject of the attitudes of local Poles and Ukrainians and of Polish partisans toward Jews discussed.

How did the BuF relate to Poles and Ukrainians? Does the documentation of the Polish and Ukrainian offices of the BuF shed any light on the extent to which the civilian administration tried to affect their attitudes toward Jews? Was such an effort made, or deemed necessary? Were the civilian authorities' policies toward Jews in any way affected in turn by Polish and Ukrainian attitudes? Such questions regarding the attitudes of the Jews' non-Jewish neighbors and of the German authorities' perceptions or concerns regarding

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*Tears: A Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto*, edited by Antony Polonsky (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), May 23, 1942, pp. 91-93.

<sup>9</sup>See, for example, Klajnman-Fradkof testimony (in German), Yad Vashem Archives, 033/1134.

these attitudes can be important to our understanding of the events. Musial, being fluent in both Polish and German, is equipped to address these subjects.

Musial has gained some repute in Germany and other parts of Europe for two other recent forays of his into the history of this period. His entanglement with the Hamburg Institut für Sozialforschung surrounding its influential exhibition on the Wehrmacht's participation in the murder of the Jews has been well publicized. Musial pointed out a number of errors in the exhibition, and this resulted in acrimony, recriminations, and even legal proceedings. His more recent book on Soviet policy in the occupied eastern Polish territories in 1939-1941,<sup>10</sup> has also raised a stir. In it he puts forward his thesis that the evidence of Soviet terror and murder that the German forces discovered upon conquering former eastern Poland in the summer of 1941, brutalized the Germans. Moreover, he argues that this, plus the fact that many Jews had served in official positions under the Soviets, spurred them to murder Jews. It thus emerges from his new book that the Jews bore some responsibility for their own murder; for the Germans would not have killed them, and their erstwhile neighbors who joined in the orgy would not have done so, if not for the crimes of the Soviet regime and their Jewish henchmen.

Of course, the notion that the Germans murdered the Jews in reaction to Soviet and Jewish crimes, as raised by Ernst Nolte many years ago, has long been discredited and dismissed, and remains untenable today. At the same time, Nolte's position has undergone a revival, especially in former communist areas, since the fall of communism. The tendency to look for an equivalency between Nazi and Soviet crimes in research and public discourse in Eastern Europe, where many felt the heavy hand of Soviet rule, is well known. And only a short stride separates Nolte's anti-communism from this anti-communism.

Musial rejects the claim that his thesis is this simplistic, rebutting that much of his thesis – that Soviet crimes were *one* factor in the brutalization – has been

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<sup>10</sup>“Konterrevolutionäre Elemente sind zu erschiessen.” Die Brutalisierung des deutsch-sowjetischen Krieges im Sommer 1941 (Berlin: Propyläen, 2000).

misrepresented, misunderstood, and quoted out of context.<sup>11</sup> Yet there is an apparent conceptual link between his two books, and it lies in his own anti-communism and Polish nationalism.<sup>12</sup> While this review was begun before the appearance of Musial's later book, the Polish nationalist undertones to the author's research were already clear in that he avoided discussion of Polish attitudes toward Jews and in his search for a shared fate that the Nazis intended for the two peoples. Musial's latest book has detracted from his stature as a historian and will cast a pall over his past and future work for a long time to come.

A particularly uneven aspect of Musial's book – one that is perhaps not surprising in view of the above – is the fact that, whereas the author makes no effort to understand the Jews and Jewish leadership in the context of his subject, he does devote some discussion to understanding the dilemmas of Polish local leadership. Musial notes, correctly, that Polish communal organization remained in place on the local level, under the supervision of the *Kreishauptmann*. Yet the local Polish leaders' position was precarious, as the *Kreishauptmann* sought to exploit them totally and they were completely under his thumb. They were caught between German demands and Polish needs (pp. 64-66).<sup>13</sup> To the historian of the Holocaust, this description of being trapped between conflicting demands might seem to resemble the status of the Judenrat under Nazi rule. A comparative analysis of German policies toward Polish village heads with the policy toward the Judenräte could perhaps be enlightening. Musial does not attempt this comparative analysis and, thus, leaves the reader with a limited picture of Poles and no picture of Jews.

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<sup>11</sup>See, for example, reviews by Peter Longerich, "*Inspirierte Gewalt*," Frankfurter Rundschau, August 11, 2000; Klaus Wiegrefe, *Der Spiegel*, August 7, 2000; Cora Stephan, *Die Welt*, August 27, 2000; Musial's brief response to Longerich in a letter to the editor, Frankfurter Rundschau, August 17, 2000; and his detailed rebuttal, "*Täter und Tabu Kein Perspektivenwechsel, sondern eine Perspektivenerweiterung – eine Antwort an die Kritiker meines neusten Buches*," Frankfurter Rundschau, October 6, 2000. I thank Professor Dan Michman for bringing these to my attention.

<sup>12</sup>Wiegrefe, *ibid.*, reports that Musial is now a German citizen, although he has returned to his native Poland, and implies that some form of German nationalism also colors Musial's new book.

<sup>13</sup>On this subject, see the excellent book by Jan Tomasz Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation; The Generalgouvernement 1939-1944* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

In the last chapters of the book, one looks in vain for a serious discussion of the last two years of the German occupation. Little is discussed regarding the last Jews in the forced-labor camps, such as Trawniki, Poniatowa, and Kraśnik, or regarding the “*Erntefest*” murder operation of November 3-4, 1943. Did the civilian authorities have much to do with these?

All the above is not meant to say that this is not a good book. The contrary is the case. No researcher can address all sources or adequately discuss all issues, and Musial cannot be faulted for not examining everything, especially when many of the sources are in languages (Hebrew and Yiddish) or places beyond his reach. However, within the context of the many archives that he did examine – and this is quite impressive – more attention might have been paid to the Jewish documentation that relates to the Germans and is housed in the same archives, as well as to the documentation that relates to the attitudes of the local non-Jewish population (at least as far as the Germans understood them).

The book under review here must be judged on its own merits, even if under the shadow of Musial’s new work. *Deutsche Zivilverwaltung und Judenverfolgung im Generalgouvernement* is a sobering book. It is somewhat long and somewhat dry. It does not answer all the major questions regarding the civilian authorities in the Lublin district; it does not even raise some of the important questions. And it has not addressed a number of important sources. Nevertheless, it is a fine piece of research, flavored with a healthy dose of justified (yet contained) moral outrage, that sheds light on one of the important subjects relating to the Holocaust. Why did they do it? In Lublin, at least, they did it because they wanted to do it. And moreover, they pretty well got away with it.

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