

(deutschen) Nationalliteratur. Damit erhielt die nur allzu oft marginalisierte deutschböhmi-sche Literatur ihre Berechtigung.

Zuweilen griff *Die Wahrheit* auch innertschechische Diskurse auf, um eigene Positio-nen abzustecken, so etwa in Besprechungen von Rudolf Medeks *Plukovník Švec* und Jaro-slav Hašeks *Švejk*. Beides waren Texte über den Ersten Weltkrieg, ersterer ein von nationalem Pathos tiefendes Heldenepos, letzterer ein in Heften erscheinender armeekritischer Schelmenroman. Beide Autoren befanden sich während des Kriegs in Russland. Medek schloss sich den Legionen an, Hašek der Linken. In der Tschechoslowakei zählte Medek zum staatstragenden Milieu, Hašek zur Bohème. *Švec* wurde durchaus wohlwollend rezipiert, *Švejk* bis auf wenige Ausnahmen negativ. All dies ist den Texten in *Die Wahrheit* eingeschrieben, wenn sie das verlogene Heldentum Medeks ablehnen und dagegen das Schelmisch-Anarchische des *Švejk* propagierten. Den Vertretern des neuen Staates wurde vorgeworfen, dass sie sich kongruent zu dem verhielten, wovon sich abzugrenzen sie be-haupteten, nämlich dem verlogenen Heldentum, das sie an der k.u.k. Armee kritisierten.

Auffallend ist, dass die einzelnen Kapitel des Buches vom Umfang her stark differieren. Der Europadiskussion sowie dem Verhältnis der *Wahrheit* zum Staat und Masaryk gesteht der Vf. jeweils zehn Seiten zu, ebenso viel wie der Rezeption Nadlers. Das mag mit dem (legitimen) Fokus des Germanisten zu tun haben. Ähnliches gilt für die Intensität, mit der die verschiedenen Themen kontextualisiert werden. Dies könnte der Komplexität der Fra-gestellungen geschuldet sein wie auch der Bedeutung, die Z. den jeweiligen Diskussionen beimisst. Naturgemäß bleiben Auswahl und Gewichtung letztlich subjektiv, doch stets be-gründet, wie der Vf. überhaupt seine Standpunkte und Methoden wie Arbeitshypothesen offenlegt und begründet – stets auf der Höhe der wissenschaftlichen Diskussion.

Die Studie stellt nicht nur eine hervorragende Arbeit über eine Zeitschrift dar, sondern implementiert auch eine erhellende Annäherungsweise an den „zerklüfteten Boden“, ohne jemals in simplifizierende Klischeefallen zu tappen. Die Rekonstruktion des erforderlichen Kontextes setzt freilich einen breiten Wissens- und Sprachhorizont voraus. Das Buch legt hiervon beeindruckendes Zeugnis ab. Nichts davon dient dem Selbstzweck, weder die ak-ribische Archivarbeit noch die minutiöse Rekonstruktion von Biografien oder der zeitge-nössischen Diskurse, sondern allein dem Verstehen einer komplexen Welt. Z. hat hierfür einen wichtigen Baustein vorgelegt.

Wien

Kurt Ifkovits

Building a Nazi Racial Community in the South-East. Mobility and Transnational Transfers between Nazi Germany and the South-Eastern European Volksdeutsche. Hrsg. von Ottmar Trașcă, Virgiliu Țărău und Corneliu Pintilescu. Verlag Friedrich Pustet. Regensburg 2024. 464 S., Ill. ISBN 978-3-7917-3443-9. (€ 39,95.)

Building a Nazi Racial Community in the South-East is a volume that includes papers presented at a conference with the same name that was held in Cluj-Napoca in 2022. Scholarly interest in the history of ethnic German minorities in various countries and re-gions—and especially their relations to Nazi Germany—has been growing. An expanding body of literature explores these connections and the spread of National Socialist ideolo-gies among these communities.¹ Most previous works have focused either on one specific

1 See, for instance: VALDIS O. LUMANS: *Himmler's Auxiliaries: The Volksdeutsche Mit-telstelle and the German National Minorities of Europe, 1933–1945*, Chapel Hill 1993; DORIS L. BERGEN: *The Nazi Concept of "Volksdeutsche" and the Exacerbation of An-ti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, 1939–45*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 29 (1994), 4, pp. 569–582; GREGOR THUM: *Volksdeutsch Revisionism—East Central Eu-rope's Ethnic Germans and the Order of Paris*, in: MARCO BRESCIANI (ed.): *Con-servatives and Right Radicals in Interwar Europe*, London 2021, pp. 44–67; CAROLINE MEZGER: *Forging Germans: Youth, Nation, and the National Socialist Mobilization of*

country's ethnic German population or on a specific aspect of the relations between Nazi Germany and the *Volksdeutsche* [ethnic Germans]. What is unique about this volume is its geographical focus on South-Eastern Europe and the fact that the chapters tackle not only one angle of the above-mentioned relations but rather a whole spectrum of connections that even sometimes span into the postwar era.

The different contributions look at the ethnic German communities of Romania, Yugoslavia, Bessarabia, and Bukovina (today parts of Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine), Hungary, and what was once Czechoslovakia. The editors grouped these papers around four major topics. The first section deals with the transnational circulation of National Socialist ideology, including the work of mediating institutions and individuals, and how this ideology facilitated the (re)definition of a "national community." The second area of focus is the indoctrination of ethnic Germans, especially the younger generation, and the inner conflicts of the communities. The third section addresses the intricate connection between mobilization and propaganda that targeted *Volksdeutsche*, while the last, but not least, section looks at the afterlife of the transnational networks and *Volksdeutsche* organizations under state socialism.

According to the editors, the Nazis' aspirations to increase their cultural and political influence was strongest in the Eastern European region where they also aimed to reshape the population structure. In particular, they tried to involve the ethnic German populations in the areas that they considered South-Eastern Europe (the countries included in this volume) in their war efforts. Often due to local circumstances, however, the Nazis were not always successful in these efforts. After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, for example, the German minorities lost their previous privileged status and the new political leaders of these states were often reluctant to grant them autonomy. While the chapters of the volume discuss these circumstances, they also demonstrate how the four major tenets of Nazi propaganda—i.e. the principle of the *Volksgemeinschaft* [national community], racial purity, scapegoating and the construction of enemies, and the recognition of a strong leader—appeared in local propaganda and the cultural-political activities of *Volksdeutsche* organizations (p. 24).

The first section of the volume focuses on the infiltration of Nazi ideology into the ethnic German communities, mostly through cultural activities such as the transnational artistic exchange initiated by Heinrich Zillich and Karl Kurt Klein (German writers living in Romania) or the circulation of the periodical of the Erneuerer movement—which, in particular, contributed to the spread of extremist ideologies among the ethnic German population of Yugoslavia. In his chapter, Corneliu Pîntilescu analyzes how radical groups instrumentalized the entire academic field of ethnography and research on folklore: Saxons living in Transylvania, he contends, considered peasants the bearers of "true culture," which made them the basis of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. As Pîntilescu emphasizes, not only personal connections, but also academic collaborations contributed to radicalization and thereby increased receptivity to Nazi ideology (p. 161).

The chapters of the second section investigate the impact of ideologies circulated particularly among youth movements in the region by actors such as the ones discussed in the first section, tracing how these youth organizations then played a role in the Nazification process. For instance, a comparison of case studies from Romania and Hungary exposes key differences in the national contexts: In Hungary, ethnic German youth organizations were established relatively late and thus did not manage to achieve much success in the indoctrination of the young generation; in Romania, on the contrary, Ulrich A. Wien demonstrates that the National Socialists managed to take over and even surpass the well-established positions of the Protestant Church in education and youth work.

Ethnic Germans in Yugoslavia, 1918–1944, Oxford 2020; ALEXA STILLER: Ethnic Germans, in: SHELLEY BARANOWSKI, ARMIN NOLZEN et al. (eds.): A Companion to Nazi Germany, Oxford 2018, pp. 533–549.

Topics from the first and second sections merge together in the third section in which the respective authors analyze how cultural and ideological exchanges combined with the work of these youth movements fed into mobilization for Germany's war efforts. The contributions investigate various aspects of this process in three countries: Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia. Beáta Márkus' chapter, for example, examines how the close relations between the leaders of the Hungarian ethnic Germans and Nazi Germany as well as intense propaganda led to a high number of volunteers for the SS (*Schutzstaffel*), the major Nazi paramilitary organization. Ottmar Trașcă's essay, in contrast, scrutinizes the desperate and failed attempt of the German secret service and the Legionary Movement to initiate a pro-German resistance in Romania after the coup in 1944.

The final section of the volume offers unique and important historiographical insights into the postwar era. Its chapters demonstrate that the radicalization and Nazification of ethnic German populations cast a long shadow well into the state socialist period. This legacy appeared not only in mechanisms of surveillance and the Securitate's policies against ethnic German leaders in Romania, but also in blackmail practices, such as in the case of former movement leaders from Slovakia. In his essay, Stefan Leher reconstructs the experiences and postwar activities of a couple of key Slovak ethnic German figures and shows how the state security apparatus threatened to discredit them.

The volume is a valuable collection of case studies tackling a range of compelling and important issues. In both its geographical focus and its inclusion of the postwar years, it adds a new dimension to existing research on this topic. All told, it is an essential historiographical contribution to scholarship on ethnic German communities in Eastern Europe.

Budapest

Borbála Klacsman

Saulius Sužiedėlis: Crisis, War, and the Holocaust in Lithuania. (Lithuanian Studies without Borders.) Academic Studies Press in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Academic Studies Press. Newton 2025. XVI, 625 S., Ill., Tab. ISBN 979-8-887-19490-5. (Open Access: <https://www.degruyterbrill.com/de/document/doi/10.1515/9798887194912/html>; Print: \$ 165,—.)

As a member of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania and a former research historian at the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI), Lithuanian-American historian Saulius Sužiedėlis is well-equipped to present a comprehensive and nuanced study of the Holocaust in Lithuania. The German occupation of Lithuania resulted in the annihilation of more than 90 percent of Lithuanian Jewry along with other victim groups such as Roma, individuals with mental disabilities, and Soviet prisoners of war. By situating the Holocaust "within Lithuania's twentieth-century social catastrophe," the author attempts to highlight "some conditions unique to Lithuania" (p. VIII). In the preface of the book, S. argues: "As historians we must also search for answers in the specific conditions of time and place that gave rise to horror" (p. IX). Thus, the book emphasizes the importance of analyzing the Holocaust not as an isolated event but as a phenomenon deeply embedded in the broader historical, social, and political ruptures of the wartime period.

The book is divided into three main parts that trace the pre-history, history, and aftermath of the Holocaust in Lithuania. The first part, entitled "Before the Shoah," examines the history of Jews in Lithuania and their interactions with non-Jewish Lithuanians; it starts with the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Russian Empire, but focuses on the interwar years and the first Soviet occupation. S. argues that the First Republic, under the authoritarian regime of Antanas Smetona, "did not result in antisemitic legislation" and all ethnic disturbances that occurred throughout the interwar years were "localized, short-lived, and relatively infrequent" (p. 88). In the second section, he dismantles the myth of "Judeo-Bolshevism" and "Jewish power" under the Soviet regime and depicts how the geopolitical crisis of 1940 and 1941 evoked the rise of antisemitism in Lithuania.