

*Dieckmann, Christoph/Quinckert, Babette/Tönsmeier, Tatjana (Hgg.): Kooperation und Verbrechen. Formen der „Kollaboration“ im östlichen Europa, 1939-1945.*

Wallstein, Göttingen 2003, 320 S. (Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus 19).

The term “collaboration”, according to French historian Philippe Burrin, evolved during the Second World War from a relatively neutral term describing a policy of cooperation to a highly polemical accusation of national treason, betrayal of one’s own nation and society. “Since then the concept of collaboration has been very closely associated with nationalist discourses, which have insisted since the end of the 18th century that the population owes the nation and state absolute devotion and loyalty”, the editors of “Kooperation und Verbrechen” elaborate in their introduction. Historians themselves have frequently assessed behavior under the Nazi Occupation based on the degree to which individual choices furthered or betrayed presumed collective national interests. The contributors to the volume “Kooperation und Verbrechen” offer a welcome challenge to traditional oppositions between col-

laboration and national patriotism. Even as the Third Reich's armies brutally dismembered the Eastern European nation-states created at Versailles in an imperialist drive to secure German "Lebensraum", many Eastern European nationalist movements perceived an opportunity to realize their own local nationalist ambitions. They welcomed German assistance with their quest to "solve" the alleged "problem" of minority populations, above all Jews, which had plagued these nationalizing states since the end of the First World War. Forms of "ethnic" nationalism in Eastern Europe not only encouraged certain kinds of cooperation with German authorities, but also helped set the boundaries and terms of resistance, a point persuasively demonstrated through Klaus-Pieter Friedrich's examination of the virulent anti-Semitism in right-wing Polish resistance movements, and Frank Golczewski's discussion of the underground Ukrainian nationalist groups which burned Polish villages in the Wolhynien in 1943.

Following the models of French historians such as Philippe Burrin and Robert Paxton, the essays in the volume "Kooperation und Verbrechen" explore how and why native governments, individuals, and institutions in Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, the Ukraine, Donbass, and Latvia cooperated with the Nazi regime and participated in the persecution of local Jewish populations to further domestic or personal agendas. While the authors demonstrate that the space for negotiation with Nazi authorities varied widely across time and space (with considerably more leeway for native authorities in Slovakia and Hungary than for those in Poland or Latvia), they simultaneously depict Nazi Ostpolitik as dynamic and relational, evolving through local initiative from below as well as orders from Berlin. Hence, political elites and local officials in Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, and Latvia participated in the expropriation of local Jewish populations as a "nationalist form of social policy", pursuing policies of "Polonization, Latvianization, or Romanization" which in some cases conflicted with Nazi attempts to keep Jewish property exclusively in German hands. Some Latvians, according to Karin Reichelt, even invoked their individual records of participation in actions against local Jews in written requests to officials for stolen Jewish furniture and dishes. In an article on Hungary, Robert Cole likewise explains how both local officials in Budapest and national authorities came to support a policy of limiting Jewish shopping hours in May-June of 1944, but for different reasons. The policy was not simply imported from Germany: while officials in the mayor's office in Budapest claimed to be responding to local complaints that Jews were buying up the freshest market goods, Hungarian authorities in the Trade and Transport Ministries supported the policy in order to intensify the isolation of Hungarian Jews, further limiting social contact between Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors. Tatjana Tönsmayer meanwhile describes how conservative nationalist elites in Slovakia willingly accepted technical "know-how" advice from German advisors on matters such as how to fight crime, organize labor, and steal property from Jews, since such advice was perceived as a kind of developmental aid, but refused ideological counsel on subjects such as the organization of Slovak youth, the content of propaganda, and the structure of the Hlinka Party itself. Rather than constructing a single universal model for understanding collaboration, these authors use their local case materials to deconstruct the term collaboration itself, emphasizing the diversity

of responses to Nazi demands, the importance of local conditions, and the fluidity of boundaries between collaboration, accomodation, dissent and resistance.

While the volume's critical stance toward Eastern European nationalist movements is one of its greatest strengths, there are several nationalist assumptions which remain unchallenged in this collection. In their introduction the editors evoke the sins of Eastern European nationalists to support some rather tired conventional wisdoms. First, Germany and its Eastern neighbors shared a common tradition of "authoritarian, radical and ethnically understood nationalism", born in the 19th century, presumably differentiated from both Western nationalisms and native liberal and Socialist traditions not only by an emphasis on racial and biological homogeneity, but also by a "rejection of many modern developments", including the ideas of 1789, Socialist internationalism, and democracy itself. This common tradition of right-wing ethnic nationalism formed the basis for cooperation between Nazis and Eastern Europeans in occupied societies, the editors claim. An essay on the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia might have confounded this typology, since ethnic nationalism there was certainly not the exclusive property of an anti-democratic, illiberal, and anti-modern camp of right-wing authoritarians. The dynamics of the Nazi occupation and the postwar expulsions may have been shaped as much by the common ground shared by the Czech nationalist right and left as by the ideological affinities between Nazism and native right-wing nationalisms.

Second, the editors' decision to exclude analysis of "those designated as *Volksdeutsche*" in Eastern Europe may have been intended merely to keep the volume from becoming unwieldy. Yet this choice also unintentionally reinforces nationalist narratives and categories which were actually far more fluid before 1945. It is no small challenge to retrospectively segregate "German" from "Slavic" populations in many of the multilingual regions of Eastern Europe. Nazi occupation authorities and racial scientists went to extraordinary lengths (and were often frustrated) as they attempted to distinguish between Slavs, Germans, Slavicized Germans and Germanizable Slavs in the occupied East. The process by which individuals landed in one category or the other was also one of local negotiation, a critical field in which the meanings of accomodation, cooperation, collaboration, and resistance were worked out in everyday life.