

Glettler, Monika/Lipták, L'ubomír/Míšková, Alena (Hgg.): *Geteilt, besetzt, beherrscht. Die Tschechoslowakei 1938-1945: Reichsgau Sudetenland, Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren, Slowakei.*

Klartext, Essen 2004, 363 S. (Veröffentlichungen der Deutsch-Tschechischen und Deutsch-Slowakischen Historikerkommission 11).

The title of the Deutsch-Tschechische and Deutsch-Slowakische Historikerkommission's eleventh volume, "Geteilt, besetzt, beherrscht," does justice to the main conclusions of its contributors. The fifteen essays in this collection by German, Czech and Slovak historians amply document that Czechoslovakia was divided, occupied, and ruled. At the same time, they overwhelmingly reinforce a monolithic image of the Czech and Slovak populations as passive objects of Nazi policies and terror. Ordinary Czechs, Slovaks, and Germans and their experiences and self-perceptions are absent in all but three of these 15 essays. Newer approaches and methodologies which focus on the "negotiation of consent" in occupied society, "Alltagsgeschichte", the contours of Nazi racial and biopolitics, gender, or even the very instability of the national categories which structured occupied society are almost absent, although one essay does draw on Karl Dietrich Bracher's 1956 theory on the "Gleichschaltung" of Nazi society. The editors insist in a brief introduction that they seek to "question traditional myths" about the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. Several of the essays in the collection, discussed below, do make good on this promise. And yet the overwhelming focus on the policies and intentions of Nazi rulers and the responses of local elites reinforces, rather than challenges, many of the traditional myths and binaries which structure the history of Nazism, occupation, and Czechoslovakia.

The absence of ordinary Czechs and Slovaks, in particular, seems to consolidate an image of these populations as passive, "subjugated" victims of Nazi terror. And yet, the interactions of Sudeten Germans, Reich German Nazis, and ordinary Czechs and Germans in daily life shaped the dynamics of Nazi rule, including, at times, the policies of the Nazi occupiers. Two exceptional essays by Freia Anders and Peter Heumos question hybrid between collaboration and resistance, occupier and occupied, in innovative ways. Heumos and Anders draw on wartime and post-war court records, a rich source which illuminates the ways in which state power

interacted with individual subjectivity and social values. Both Heumos and Anders focus more on the values established and promoted by the courts than on the responses of the defendants, but in doing so they flesh out the historically, locally, and socially variegated meaning of terms like collaboration and resistance during and after the occupation.

Anders explores National Socialist conceptions of morality in the judgements of the provincial courts of the Reichsgau Sudetenland, emphasizing the interaction between "social norms and the norms of the colonizers." She emphasizes that while Nazi ideology exerted an indirect influence on the courts' judgements, these judgements were also informed by traditional bourgeois ideas about morality, with harsher penalties reserved for "lazy" workers, "self-interested" consumers, and women who defied traditional gender norms. Local nationalist concerns also came to the fore, as defendants' national reliability was put on trial. Anders documents how judge's own expectations of defendants also varied extensively based on the nation, gender, class of the accused, underscoring the extent to which the very definition of "collaboration" or "resistance" in occupied society depended on the specific social position of individuals. Her analysis also questions binary distinctions between the values and norms of colonizers and colonized, by demonstrating the extent to which the Nazi court's own judgements built on local and traditional values, thereby gaining legitimacy.

In a fascinating essay on postwar collaboration trials held by the Prague "Zentralrat der Gewerkschaften," Peter Heumos warns that collaborators are too often "exoticized" by historians as "moral scum of the nation," excluding any kind of objective consideration of their motives and interests (97). This becomes evident in a contribution on press censorship in the Protectorate by Dušan Tomášek, which tends to confirm a Švejk-like narrative about passive Czech subterfuge during the war, a narrative that Nazi officials ironically invoked to justify further repression. Those Czech journalists who did assume chief editorial positions in Czech newspapers under the occupation, Tomášek insists, constituted a mere "fanatic minority" of no more than a dozen people (86).

In fact, as Heumos argues convincingly, individuals did not always see their interests in national terms during the occupation. Other identities could and did shape individual action or non-action, including professional and class loyalties. Moreover, as Tatjana Töns-mayer persuasively demonstrates, even when an individual's primary loyalties were to the nation, as in the case of Slovak elites in Hlinka's "Party of National Unity", this nationalist orientation did not rule out collaboration with authorities in Berlin. Slovak elites, Töns-mayer argues, attempted to realize their own nationalist goals through the Nazi occupation (much like Petain's regime in Vichy France), and they enjoyed considerable latitude to implement their own domestic agenda (322).

Ralf Gebel, Jaroslav Hoffman, Volker Zimmermann, and Stanislav Biman all take up the issue of Sudeten German responses to the Nazi occupation. Gebel and Zimmermann tend to emphasize points of tension between Reich German Nazis and Sudeten Germans, over matters ranging from social and labor policy, to mobilization for the Wehrmacht, to the influx of civil servants from the Altreich. Gebel and

Zimmermann simultaneously remind us that these disagreements reflected Sudeten German disappointment when their exalted expectations of paradise on earth weren't met by the Nazi regime, rather than fundamental ideological tensions or resistance. Biman, in turn, emphasizes the participation of local Sudeten Germans at nearly all levels of the Nazi administration in the Gau Sudetenland, in order to counter the postwar claims of Sudeten German expellees that they were themselves powerless victims of a Nazi occupation. For example, he argues that Sudeten German members of the "Kameradschaftsbund" who were purged from the administration of the Sudetengau based on accusations of homosexuality in 1940 were not removed from power based on any real ideological differences with Nazis or the SS, but were genuinely purged because of their sexual orientation. In so doing he hopes to shatter the "legend" that these individuals strove only for autonomy for the Sudetenland and were not committed Nazis.

Nonetheless, Zimmermann actually shares Biman's agenda of deconstructing the myth of Sudeten German "collective innocence" under Nazi rule. Sudeten Germans in expellee associations, he argues, propagated a selective and sometimes false memory of the Nazi occupation, remaining conspicuously silent about the violence directed towards Jews or Czechs. Even more interesting (and equally damning) Zimmermann highlights continuities which characterized Sudeten German memory and self-perception during and after the Second World War. For example, Nazi informants during the Nazi occupation frequently reported grumbling among Sudeten Germans about the deployment of Reich German civil servants in the Sudetenland, which corresponded to the postwar claim that local Germans had no authority or power within the Nazi state. Sudeten German celebrations of their "liberation" in 1938 corresponded to a postwar insistence that the Munich Agreement fulfilled their right to national self-determination; the wartime claim that Czechs were often at an advantage because they were exempt from military service later mutated into memories about how "good times" Czechs had had under Nazism.

At a broader level, is it possible to move beyond discussing experiences under Nazism in binary terms that counterpose collective guilt and collective innocence? It seems far more helpful to our understanding of Nazi "Ostpolitik" and the dynamics of Occupation to retain a sense of the diverse interests and identities of Reich German and Sudeten German Nazis, for example. Making such distinctions need not excuse Sudeten German Nazis from their complicity in Nazi atrocities. After all, many Sudeten German administrators and ordinary citizens complained that Reich German Nazis were too "soft" on (or even friendly with) Czechs, that they didn't do enough to suppress the ongoing threat of "Czechification" in their towns and villages. Reich German and Sudeten German Nazis used each other under the occupation to achieve ideological and social goals which were certainly parallel but not always identical. Nor does exploring the ways in which ordinary Czechs or Slovaks exercised agency under the occupation detract from our understanding of the violence or brutality of the Nazi occupation. Appreciating these dynamics actually deepens our understanding of the terms on which accommodation, participation, and complicity were negotiated and secured in occupied Czechoslovakia.