

he would be caught. Enrolled students experienced a highly regimented, supervised, and militarized daily routine that included many inspections, encompassing even personal items such as toothbrushes and combs. Meals at the Napolas were preceded by the reading of “table slogans,” such as, for example, “Eternal peace is a dream, and not even a very attractive one” (95). In addition to mandating a full program of sports, physical education, and military exercises, the Napolas required every pupil to learn to play a musical instrument, preferably one that could be played while marching. Theatrical productions, performed both in-house and while traveling, included not only classics by Schiller and Kleist but also plays that mocked Neville Chamberlain, Winston Churchill, and Franklin Roosevelt. Prewar student exchanges with boarding schools in the United Kingdom and the United States incorporated such welcoming gestures as flying the swastika flag at some American host schools. In addition to opportunities for travel and artistic expression, the Napolas required pupils to spend several months working at factories or mines, where they reportedly performed demanding assignments well. Perhaps the most dramatic stories in Roche’s book are those of the Napolas’ evacuations during the final weeks of the war. Although some boys at the Napola on the Baltic island of Rügen insisted on staying behind to fight the Russians, the headmaster decided to use the Napola’s small fleet of sailboats to escape by sea. Only after evading an Allied aerial attack did the boys and staff members arrive in Holstein. The memories of alumni tended to minimize the ways that Nazi ideology permeated life and study at the Napolas, but Helen Roche uses telling examples to remind her readers of the ubiquity of this influence, which took both blatant and subtle forms.

The inclusion of material gleaned from eighty archives in six countries enables Roche both to generalize about the common purpose, organization, and pedagogy that linked all of the Napolas, and to examine the distinctive features of different groups of schools, based on their locations and origins. This outstanding book merits the attention of those who seek to understand how National Socialism worked and how people became Nazis.

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## **In the Shadow of Auschwitz: German Massacres against Polish Civilians, 1939-1945**

**By Daniel Brewing. Translated by Alex Skinner. New York: Berghahn, 2022. Pp. viii + 348. Cloth \$155.00. ISBN: 978-1800730892.**

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Daniel Brewing’s study of German massacres of Polish civilians during the Second World War is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the Nazi occupation of Poland. Originally published in German in 2016, it is now available in an excellent English translation. The specific focus of the monograph is the killing of (non-Jewish) Polish civilians by German police and military forces. Brewing notes that these operations, in which tens of thousands of civilians were killed, have received relatively modest attention in the vast scholarship on German atrocities in occupied Poland. This comparative neglect, the author suggests, is due in part to an insidious lingering perception of these massacres as not being war crimes or atrocities at all, but rather the result of “normal” anti-partisan measures undertaken against an inherently violent and treacherous foe.

Brewing argues that the link between German fears of insurgency and mass violence against Polish civilians was, indeed, crucial, but the former needs to be understood as a largely self-fulfilling ideological construct. There were, to be sure, real episodes of Polish violence against ethnic Germans, most famously in Bydgoszcz at the outset of the war, just as there certainly were genuine Polish partisan activities, especially starting in 1942, when expectations of ultimate German defeat started to swell. But German anxieties about Polish threats were often anticipatory, preceding any actual Polish actions, as well as grossly exaggerated. They therefore became pretexts for wildly disproportionate violence that erased any distinction between combatant and civilian. The book examines episodes of such radical escalation in the first weeks of the war, when thousands of Polish civilians, especially members of the intelligentsia in the Polish western territories now annexed to the Reich, were targeted for execution. The central focus of Brewing's analysis, however, are the massacres of civilians committed by German forces in rural areas of the districts of Lublin and Radom in the General Government in 1943 and 1944. These massacres, in turn, provided precedents and models for the even more ferocious slaughter of civilians that characterized the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising in the late summer of 1944.

Informed by meticulous research in German and Polish archives, Brewing's account traces how the *idées fixes* of German authorities drove a vicious cycle of escalation. A belief that Poles only responded to overwhelming force filtered all evidence of failure into a need to respond with ever greater and more indiscriminate violence. Rivalry between the SS and the military further fuelled this escalatory spiral. While Brewing makes clear that mass violence against civilians was sanctioned by the highest echelons of the Nazi regime, he also shows that lower-level commanders as well as ordinary policemen and soldiers, including Polish citizens given the status of ethnic/racial German (*Volksdeutsche*), also enjoyed varying degrees of discretion in the scale and nature of their participation in these acts of violence.

The book is composed of ten chapters, some of them quite brief, organized in three, broadly chronological parts. The text frequently takes the form of a series of numbered points. The resulting style might not be to every reader's taste. But it certainly does reflect a disciplined and clearly explicated argument, carefully placed within an extensive existing literature and persuasively supported by meticulous primary research.

Perhaps the most debatable aspect of the book is its overall framing. German massacres of Polish civilians during the Second World War are placed squarely within a binational story, starting with an extensive introductory chapter on German/Prussian policy toward Poles after 1848 and concluding with an epilogue on limited and often unsuccessful prosecutions of perpetrators in postwar West Germany. For a book originally published in German as an intervention in German public debates, this is an entirely defensible choice. As Brewing argues most forcefully in the conclusion, the combination of recent attention to the suffering of German civilians during and after the Second World and recent attention to the participation of Poles in massacres of Jews during the war has tended to push German war crimes against Poles out of German public consciousness. Highlighting the brutality and scale of wartime German killing of Polish civilians within a longer story of German oppression of Poles can thus provide a salutary corrective to such tendencies. But massacres in occupied Poland could be – and have been – understood as parts of other long-term developmental narratives with more mobile geographies, in which the German military's obsession with *franc-tireurs* in the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War, or its practice of indiscriminate violence against civilians in Southwest Africa were extrapolated and adapted to occupied Poland during the Second World War. Brewing is well aware of these alternative origin stories, just as he is well aware of the many ways in which wartime massacres of non-Jewish Poles in the General Government were entangled with the implementation of the Final Solution and with the escalation of anti-partisan violence across occupied Europe. These sideways glances beyond a strict German-Polish context are, however, fleeting,

somewhat limiting the book's engagement with broader questions surrounding anti-partisan warfare and massacres of civilians.

The monograph's national framing also generates some interesting tensions with the profoundly localized dynamics of the phenomena being studied. Despite regular (and understandable) short-hand references to "occupied Poland," the book's actual focus is the central part of the General Government (the districts of Lublin and Radom). Brewing duly acknowledges this geographic specificity, noting limited treatment of western Poland and an almost complete absence of discussion of the eastern half of Poland. This sensitivity to "major spatial differences" and "situational factors" (151) is commendably maintained in the rest of the narrative. But it never quite results in self-reflection on the limits of reliance on generic national categories to examine experiences generated by the Nazi regime's wildly varying and often self-contradictory "nationality policy" (*Volkstumspolitik*) across the territories of occupied Poland.

These relatively minor caveats notwithstanding, *In the Shadow of Auschwitz* is an impressive piece of scholarship and should be read by anyone interested in the German occupation of Poland during the Second World War. Berghahn Books – and translator Alex Skinner – should be commended for broadening that potential readership by making the monograph available in English.

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## **Jewish Fugitives in the Polish Countryside, 1939-1945: Beyond the German Holocaust Project**

**By Joanna Tokarska-Bakir. Translated by Yecheskiel Anis et al. Berlin: Peter Lang, 2022. Pp. 440. Cloth \$70.00. ISBN: 978-3631849279.**

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After assuming power in 2015, the Law and Justice party embarked on a political and mnemonic campaign to protect the "good name of the Polish nation" concerning the events of World War II. The government actively promoted a narrative of Polish heroism and resistance against Nazi occupation, while simultaneously downplaying or denying Polish involvement in the persecution of Jews. This approach sparked global criticism from scholars and academics, who condemned not only the distortion of history but also the threat such an official stance posed to independent research. Indeed, Holocaust scholars in Poland have been subjected to legal sanction, public backlash, and concerns regarding censorship and job security. Despite these challenges, many scholars remain steadfast in their dedication to uncovering the truth about the Holocaust and reaching a more nuanced understanding of this dark chapter in human history.

Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, an anthropologist at the Polish Academy of Sciences, is one such scholar. She is a prominent voice in the field of Polish-Jewish Holocaust historiography, which critically examines Poland's history of interethnic relations, challenging national myths and stereotypes while presenting compelling evidence from previously underutilized archives. Through her research, Tokarska-Bakir sheds light on the responses of Christian Poles to the genocide of their Jewish compatriots. *Jewish Fugitives in the Polish Countryside* is a collection of selected articles by Tokarska-Bakir, translated into English for the first