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

time, with the exception of one chapter that was reproduced in German for unknown reasons. These texts are the culmination of extensive archival and ethnographic research, primarily concentrated in south-central and eastern Poland, which explore the experiences of Jews who sought refuge in rural areas during the war.

Tokarska-Bakir strives to produce an "ethnography of the Holocaust" (15) placing emphasis on the human experiences, expressions, and interactions between Jews and Poles during the third phase of the Nazi genocide in occupied Poland. This particular period, which began after the liquidation of ghettos in 1942, revolved around the hunt for approximately 250,000 Polish Jews who had evaded Nazi deportation and remained in hiding within the General Government. It was a critical juncture when the actions of Poles could significantly impact Jewish survival, given the relatively limited presence of German forces. In fact, Tokarska-Bakir regularly underscores the absence of Germans, stating that they "barely feature in the frame" (15). Delving into the complexities of local interethnic relations, the book reveals numerous instances of betrayal and violence against Jewish fugitives by Polish residents. Sexual abuse was extensive in such cases, shedding light on an important yet underexplored aspect of Jewish women's experiences. Appallingly, anti-Jewish violence persisted after the Nazi occupation, as Holocaust survivors continued to face a wave of robberies, assassinations, and organized attacks.

Tokarska-Bakir reconstructs these events through a combination of Jewish oral histories, ethnographic fieldwork, and postwar Polish war crimes investigations. The latter, conducted under the August Decree of 1944 in the new People's Republic, were previously regarded as Stalinist-era show trials, tainted by fabricated evidence, predetermined convictions, and severe punishment for Polish patriots. However, recent scholarship has shown that communist courts, largely presided over by prewar Polish judges and lawyers, approached cases involving Polish crimes against Jews differently. Individuals were often exonerated or received lenient sentences. Tokarska-Bakir's research supports this finding, as most of the accused Poles in the trials she studies, despite substantial evidence against them, were acquitted, sentenced leniently, or granted amnesty. In some instances, such as in the town of Klimontów, residents even concealed their crimes by intimidating witnesses, bribing officials, and tampering with police documents until the criminal investigation was terminated. As one Polish Holocaust survivor poignantly observed, "We have our own native Eichmanns, who escape everything with impunity" (338). Furthermore, counternarratives of Polish criminality have emerged, often supported by the Institute of National Remembrance, blaming Jewish victims for their own misfortunes and glorifying Polish perpetrators as national heroes and martyrs.

Through a rigorous investigation of personal and proximate sources, Tokarska-Bakir provides an intimate portrayal of Polish perpetrators, even pinpointing their social status within the community. In Poland, popular and academic discourse largely portrays peasants as the main culprits of wartime criminality, perpetuating stereotypes of their supposed backwardness and brutishness, while idealizing the middle class and the nobility as more refined and cultured. Tokarska-Bakir challenges this notion, revealing that Polish perpetrators came from diverse socioeconomic and political backgrounds, with a notable concentration among the middle and professional classes. Among them were teachers, political activists, policemen, and government workers. These "rural elites" (71) played a significant role in disseminating ethnonationalism and antisemitic prejudice in Poland's countryside since the late nineteenth century. Their political influence and nationalist fervor set them apart from other residents, while their enduring power and privileges help explain why certain crimes went unpunished and remained hidden from outsiders. Tokarska-Bakir further argues that not only has the rural middle class evaded legal and historical responsibility, but it continues to incite xenophobia against Jews and other minorities in present-day Poland. Recent rituals involving the beating and burning of Judas effigies serve as disturbing manifestations of this ongoing prejudice.

One of the central contributions of Tokarska-Bakir's work is her exploration of the continuity and radicalization of Polish antisemitism. She skillfully traces the cultural and ideological backdrop of Polish violence against Jews before, during, and after the Holocaust.

Tokarska-Bakir argues that political nationalism, economic resentment, and religious prejudice all created an atmosphere of hatred, generating a "lethal community" (21) that erupted into large-scale violence. To enrich her thesis, the author incorporates social-scientific research, notably drawing on Roberta Senechal de la Roche's theories on collective violence as a means of social control. According to this model, Polish society sought a sense of security and empowerment amid the upheavals of World War II by aggressively targeting Jews, based on long-held perceptions of them as deviants and outcasts. The precious few Poles who rescued Jews were deemed traitors and targeted in this upsurge as well. Overall, even with the absence of a centralized Polish government during the war, pervasive enmity and an ingrained antisemitic ethos at the grassroots level led to genocidal violence. Tokarska-Bakir categorizes this as an ethnic cleansing of Poland's Jewish population, with the number of victims running into the hundreds of thousands.

While Tokarska-Bakir's research provides valuable insights into Polish-Jewish relations, her attempt to transcend the confines of the German Holocaust project overlooks important considerations of social context. The Nazi onslaught on Poland unleashed a cataclysmic wave of suffering and destruction, akin to an "iron wind" (Peter Fritzsche), which fundamentally reshaped social realities and individual mindsets across the occupied population. However, by focusing on local incidents devoid of a German presence, the book suggests a sense of autonomy and isolation for Polish and Jewish residents, detached from the brutal realities of the war. It is crucial to acknowledge that rural communities in Poland endured numerous executions, pacification campaigns, forced labor roundups, population displacements, food requisitions, and other forms of Nazi terror. These experiences, compounded with widespread poverty, scarcity, and insecurity, left an indelible and lasting impact on Polish society, as demonstrated in Marcin Zaremba's recently translated study (*Entangled in Fear: Everyday Terror in Poland, 1944–1947* [2022]).

In addition to direct interventions, the Germans oversaw a colonial-style security system in the occupied Polish countryside, exerting remote control through a complex network of village officials, rural guards, hostages, and informers. Joanna Tokarska-Bakir delves into this system in her second chapter, specifically focused on the January 1943 hunt for Jews (Judenjagd) in Bełk. Her research reveals the significant roles played by "fear and conformism" (51) in motivating the participation of local residents, even with the physical absence of German occupiers. However, these factors receive limited attention in the rest of the book, creating an impression that anti-Jewish violence in Poland was spontaneous, "easy to predict" (361), and inevitable. This static interpretation fails to convey the emergent nature of mass violence and neglects cases where interethnic relations were previously tolerant or where violence did not occur. Moreover, the articles collected in this volume neglect to address popular violence against other marginalized groups, such as escaped Soviet POWs, while only briefly mentioning intracommunal attacks amongst Polish Catholics. By situating crimes against Jews within the wider spectrum of popular and interethnic violence, further insights can be gained into the wartime social dynamics that motivated and facilitated acts of cruelty, even among "ordinary" people.

In the two decades since the groundbreaking publication of Jan Gross's *Neighbors* (2000), scholars have extensively documented the complicity of Poles during the Holocaust and the ongoing violence against Jewish survivors after the war. Joanna Tokarska-Bakir's research stands as a significant addition to this body of knowledge, as she masterfully combines archival information, ethnographic fieldwork, and a social-scientific lens to uncover new insights. Although further exploration is needed into the social context and situational dynamics of collective violence in occupied Poland, her meticulous examination of forgotten crimes serves as a powerful testament to the pursuit of historical truth and a compelling reminder of its enduring importance, particularly in the face of political pressure and attempts to distort or deny the past.

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