

Zitierhinweis

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deten Staat einsetzen, in einem großen Dilemma, das sich noch verschärfte, als die Slowakei den USA im Dezember 1941 den Krieg erklärte. Amerikanische Slowaken waren somit Bürger eines Staates, der sich im Krieg mit der Slowakei befand. Diejenigen, die während der Zeit der Neutralität erfolglos für die diplomatische Anerkennung des slowakischen Staates durch die USA agitiert hatten, standen nun unter Beobachtung der Behörden und der Polizei. C. beschreibt ausführlich, wie diese überwiegend katholischen Slowaken versuchten, die Öffentlichkeit davon zu überzeugen, dass sie gute amerikanischen Patrioten und Demokraten seien, obwohl sie ein undemokratisches Regime und Hlinkas Slowakische Volkspartei, die bereits seit Oktober 1938 den Charakter einer Staatspartei besaß, unterstützten. Der Vf. behauptet sogar, Antisemitismus sei unter katholischen amerikanischen Slowaken selten gewesen (S. 139); sie zeigten aber doch ganz im Gegenteil Zuneigung für einen Staat, der nicht nur antisemitisch, sondern auch für den Holocaust an den slowakischen Juden verantwortlich war.

Die Entscheidung des Autors, den Abschnitt über den Slowakischen Aufstand von 1944 in das Kapitel über die Tschechoslowakei der Nachkriegszeit aufzunehmen, verwundert. Der Aufstand wird so aus seinem historischen Kontext herausgerissen, was seine „transatlantische Perspektive“ erheblich verzerrt, da die USA ihn moralisch, politisch und materiell unterstützten und ein Teil der amerikanischen Slowaken die Wiederherstellung der Tschechoslowakei im Sinne der Aufständischen, also als eine Föderation, akzeptierten. Dies jedoch wird von C. in einen Kontext gestellt, der bereits von dem internen Kampf zwischen den Zentralisten unter Edvard Beneš und den Föderalisten geprägt war. Bezüglich der Nachkriegszeit ignoriert der Vf. vor allem die kommunistischen Aufstandsteilnehmer, die zum Zentralismus tendierten, der ihnen zur Macht verhelfen sollte. Dass dies der Regierung der USA sowie den dort lebenden Slowaken bewusst war, wird von C. nicht erwähnt.

Das Buch enthält viel interessantes Material, aber die Interpretation dieses zweifellos nicht einfachen Themas gelangt nicht über altbekannte Stereotypen hinaus, die aus der Literatur amerikanischer Slowaken – die manchmal offen, manchmal heimlich Hlinkas Slowakische Volkspartei und ihre amerikanischen Anhänger als Hauptkämpfer für die „Lösung der Slowakischen Frage“ präsentiert – übernommen worden sind.

Bratislava

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In the Shadow of the Great War: Physical Violence in East-Central Europe, 1917–1923. Hrsg. von Jochen Böhrer, Ota Konrád und Rudolf Kučera. Berghahn. New York–Oxford 2021. 236 S., ISBN 978-1-78920-939-6. (\$135,–).

For more than a decade—at least since the publication of Robert Gerwarth’s and John Horne’s volume *War in Peace: Paramilitary Violence in Europe after the Great War* (2012), and Gerwarth’s pathbreaking book *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917–1923* (2016)—historians of Eastern and Southeastern Europe have increasingly focused on the years immediately after the Great War as a period of continuities and not just ruptures. Several monographs, edited volumes, and journal articles have confirmed that this era was indeed in many respects a part of the so-called Greater War, as the fighting and the violence did not cease in November 1918 but continued well into the 1920s.

The present volume, edited by three established historians who are experts on the period, Jochen Böhrer, Ota Konrád, and Rudolf Kučera, is another addition to the body of literature that focuses on the entanglements and intertwinements between the war and the post-war years. Situating violence perpetrated by state and non-state actors at the center of their analysis, the authors look at defeated as well as victorious states in nine case studies. That—as the editors emphasize in their introduction—invites comparisons and allows us to question the usefulness of the often-employed “culture of victory” and “culture of defeat” tropes.

In the first chapter, Mathias Voigtmann looks at the so-called *Baltikumer*, the German paramilitaries who fought in the Baltics after the war in the East had formally ended. He analyzes their manifold motives and their self-understanding, as well as their reentry into civilian life, showing how the violence importantly defined them as a community, a *Gewaltgemeinschaft*. Christopher Gilley's essay on Ukraine tries to restore the agency of regional warlords, the *otamany*, by analyzing the personae these freelancers tried to project while they aligned themselves with various parties involved in the brutal conflicts.

Somewhat surprisingly, the next two chapters focus on the same topic—Béla Bodó and Emily R. Gioielli both write about gendered sexual violence in Hungary. Their perspectives, however, are not the same. Bodó wants to understand the circumstances that led to the violence, while Gioielli is interested in the aftermath as she looks at the role sexual violence had in “atrocities stories” and how they were told and retold.

Winson Chu's essay analyzes the reporting of Joseph Roth from Poland during the Polish-Soviet war and the fighting in Upper Silesia, showing how his newspaper articles painted a picture of the East that was different from the depictions in his novels. Roth the journalist was less fascinated by the region and prone to Orientalizing. He wrote about supposed German cultural superiority, was severely critical of the fledgling Polish state, and at the same time sympathetic to the Soviets.

Hannes Leidinger's and Maciej Górny's chapters look at suicide and “war neuroses” in the context of World War I and postwar violence. As interesting and informative as Leidinger's text is, it is also hard to overlook that it does not really fit the volume. The timeframe is different and the phenomenon at the center of his attention is only marginally connected with the overall topic. Górny's essay, on the other hand, is a nice addition. He examines how Austria-Hungary and its successor states dealt with so-called war neurosis, and—among other things—points out that the wartime response was conditioned by doctors' inability to communicate with non-German speaking patients and by implicit ethnic hierarchies.

In the final two chapters, Ondřej Matějka writes about the role of the North American YMCA in the newly founded Czechoslovak armed forces, and Cătălin Parfene writes about the attempts of the Romanian crown prince to use the national football team as a tool of nation-building. Matějka shows how the YMCA was instrumental in its efforts to forge a competent fighting force out of heterogeneous recruits, and how it also played a role in the demobilization of veterans and its attempts to prevent outbreaks of violence as thousands left the army. Parfene's chapter focuses on the Romanian crown prince's largely unsuccessful nation-building undertaking; the national football team, established in 1922, was largely comprised of minorities and therefore was rather a blunt tool for Romanian nation-building. Boris Barth's afterword wraps up the volume.

Despite the increased attention that the region and the era have received recently, there is much that we still need to learn, and this collection is a welcome addition to the existing historiography. Individual chapters include new material and important new insights. Overall, however, the volume does not quite work as an integral whole but more as a collection of disparate parts. Several chapters, as interesting as they are, do not tell us a lot about the central topic of the volume, physical violence. This, however, often happens with edited volumes and does not really diminish the scholarly contributions of the chapters in this collection.

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