

in the deepest pit of Hell, where suffering was the most intense.

The lives of others: In *A Gilded Lapse of Time*, Gjertrud Schnackenberg presciently used this phrase in her poem for Mandelstam “A Monument In Utopia (Osip Mandelstam).” In 2006, the film *The Lives of Others (Das Leben der Anderen)* opened in Germany. Its presentation of the lives of paranoia, under meticulous, widespread surveillance and imprisonment, would have been envied by Stalin, surrounded as he was by blunt-force trauma underlings and their often random brutalities. Hexagon is only available: enough said.

Warsaw 1944: Hitler, Himmler, and the Warsaw Uprising

By **Alexandra Richie**. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2013. 738 pages including illustrations and index. ISBN: 978-0-374-28655-2.

Anna M. Cienciala

Alexandra Richie is already known for her book *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin* (New York: Carroll & Graff, 1997), a runner-up for the Pulitzer Prize in 1998. She married Władysław Bartoszewski, Jr. and now resides in Warsaw. Her book on the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 is the most detailed account of the *Armia Krajowa* (Home Army) two-month fight to free the city from the Germans as the Red Army stood by across the Vistula in the eastern part of the capital, Praga, from mid-September onward. The Polish language version with Zofia Kunert is titled *Warszawa 1944* (Warsaw: Grupa Wydawnicza Foksal, 2014).

The year 1944 has different meanings for many nations. In Western Europe it means liberation from German occupation by American and British troops, with the latter including Polish units. In Central Europe it means liberation by Soviet troops, but also the imposition of Soviet domination. For Poles, 1944 is the year of the Warsaw Uprising against the Germans (August 1–October 2) with the political aim of demonstrating Polish independence against the “Polish Committee of National Liberation” set

up on July 22, 1944 by Polish Communists, allegedly in Lublin but in fact in Moscow.

It may seem strange that the book starts with a chapter on Belarus, but this is as it should be. It was here, under German occupation, that the Wehrmacht began to use—mostly with other helpers—the strategy of wiping out entire villages and towns to crush Soviet-supported partisan resistance. These actions were carried out with the full knowledge of German military commanders and were directed by two criminals: Oskar Paul Dirlewanger (1896–1945)—a Nazi since 1923, Ph.D. in political science, member of the SS (Schutzstaffel, or Protection Units), and Bronisław Kamiński (1899–1944), born in Vitebsk. Dirlewanger formed a military unit out of renegades held in a German concentration camp; they were supposed to be “rehabilitated” by military service (sic). Kamiński’s father was of Polish descent and his mother was German. He was an engineer working in the alcohol industry. His hatred of the Soviet system stemmed from his arrest and sentence for adherence to a “counter-revolutionary group”; the sentence was light, since it meant employment in a network distillery. He was sent to the Lokot area near Bryansk, where he offered his services to the Germans in November 1941; they allowed him to organize a militia to fight the partisans. The militia grew into a brigade and retreated alongside the Wehrmacht to Poland. Both men led their units as part of the German Army, wore its uniforms, and were responsible for the massacres of Warsaw civilians during the Uprising, accompanied by unheard of cruelty. General Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski (1889–1972) was in charge of the operations both in German-occupied Belarus and in Warsaw.

Richie’s book is based on broad German and Polish documentation, as well as secondary literature, published memoirs, and the author’s interviews with survivors. She shows that Hitler was determined to destroy the Polish capital and closely followed the fighting—as reported by the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler—while sitting in his bunker in East Prussia. The Führer devoted to this task forces that could have strengthened his army in the west, particularly airplanes, and an almost indestructible armored

train that aimed its powerful guns with enormously heavy shells at various areas of the Polish capital as the fighting progressed.

The first wholesale massacre of civilians took place in the region of Wola, west of the city center (map, 108). There, as the Polish Home Army was forced to retreat, Dirlewanger's troops went house to house, looting, raping, torturing, and murdering the inhabitants. Heinz Reinefarth (1903–1979), SS and police leader in the Warta region, ordered the first wave of death in Wola. Nevertheless, he lived peacefully in Germany after the war, was the mayor of a town on the island of Sylt, and later worked as a lawyer; all investigations of his wartime activity were dropped. SS General Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, who was in charge of the entire German military action, gave testimony against the accused Nazi leaders at Nuremberg and thus escaped punishment. He was later tried for a murder committed in the Nazi Party purge of 1934 and died in prison. As Richie shows, the massacres continued in every region of Warsaw.

The readers of this book will need nerves of steel as they follow the fighting with its tales of horror, suffering, and tremendous cost in Polish lives through each of Warsaw's six administrative districts. She devotes chapter 11 to a discussion of the policies of the Allies and Hitler in connection with the Battle of Czerniaków (map, 519). She calls it "The First Battle of the Cold War" because "two mutually exclusive world views came into open conflict" (475). In fact, there had been conflicts earlier east of Warsaw, but in view of the Western Allies' pressure on Stalin to help the Uprising and his refusal, this struggle presaged the future cold war. It is estimated that about 200,000 people died, while most of the city center was ravaged and then burned by the Germans, including its historical buildings, museums, and libraries. The longest fight was in the *Stare Miasto* (Old Town) district—the original city location—whose beautiful old buildings were completely destroyed. After the end of the war the survivors rebuilt them with painstaking care, along with the Royal Castle and the nearby part of Warsaw.

While the fighters and civilian population of Warsaw are honored in public memory for their bravery and endurance and there is a Museum of the Warsaw Uprising, a debate still rages among Polish historians as well as the public at large on whether the Uprising should have taken place at all. Some, like Jan M. Ciechanowski (*The Warsaw Rising of 1944*, London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974), Piotr Zychowicz (*Oblęd '44*, Warsaw: Rebis, 2013), and Rafał Ziemkiewicz (*Jakie piękne samobójstwo*, Warsaw: Fabryka słów, 2014) openly condemn the decision to fight as doomed due to the lack of military supplies. Most believe the rising was inevitable given the circumstances of the time. On July 20, 1944, an attempt was made on Hitler's life that wounded him but seemed to presage a revolt against him by army officers. The German armies were in full retreat; German military and civilians were leaving Warsaw. The Polish-language Soviet propaganda radio "Kosciuszko" called on Varsovians to secure the Vistula bridges on July 29. Polish Prime Minister Stanisław Mikołajczyk, leader of the Polish Government-in-Exile, London, who arrived in Moscow at the end of July, told Stalin about the Uprising on August 2 and asked for Soviet help. Stalin said he had no knowledge of it, but that he would give all possible assistance. At the same time, he advised Mikołajczyk to meet with members of the Polish Committee of National Liberation. The Polish premier met with them, but refused to accept the majority communist government they proposed—with Stalin's backing, of course. Back in Warsaw guns were heard in the eastern part of the capital, Praga, and interpreted as signaling the arrival of the Red Army. Unknown to the Poles, however, this was only part of the vanguard of the First Ukrainian Front. It was in these circumstances that General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski (1895–1966), commander of the Home Army, gave the order to start the uprising on August 1.

The Home Army in Warsaw numbered some 40,000 men and women. They were woefully underequipped because the original plan, code-named "*Burza*" (storm), for multistaged uprisings as the German armies retreated had omitted large cities. Bór had counted on Allied

help by air, especially the sending of the Polish Parachute Brigade, but was told on July 30 by courier Jan Nowak-Jeziorański—sent via Italy from London—that this was out of the question. In fact, the Polish Parachute Brigade—formed expressly to fight in Poland, was ordered by Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery to support British airborne troops in crossing the Rhine into Germany (Arnhem). Bór-Komorowski was aware that Red Army commanders had arrested Polish officers after accepting their units' help in liberating Wilno (Vilnius) and Lwów (Lviv); nevertheless, he expected Soviet help because Warsaw was the main transport hub between Moscow and Berlin. He obviously did not anticipate the destruction of Warsaw (see interview with Alexandra Richie, <http://historia.newsweek.pl/zniszczenie-warszawy-tego-powstancy-nie-mogli-przewidziec.artykuly,348965,1.html>). In 1958 when this reviewer asked the general in London what he would have done if the Red Army had come into Warsaw and tried to arrest him and his officers, his answer was: "Of course, we would have defended ourselves."

Alexandra Richie sees the main reason for the Home Army's military defeat in the arrival of new German forces led by General Otto Moritz Walter Model (1891–1945) that also stopped the First Ukrainian Front vanguard east of Warsaw. She gives a brief account of the Warsaw Uprising and her views of it in an interview with the Polish-language edition of *Newsweek* cited above. In her book she discusses the lack of Western Allies' help. Except for a few flights from Brindisi, Italy, by Polish and South African pilots, Warsaw received no supplies whatsoever. The lack of substantial help was later justified by the British-U.S. critical need of the Red Army's continued fight against the German Wehrmacht before as well as after the Normandy invasion. This fact was the basis of the Western Allies' decision in August 1943 to consign Eastern Europe to the Soviet war theater and keep silent about Soviet arrests of anticommunists in East Central Europe (Anna M. Cienciala, "The Diplomatic Background of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944: The Players and the Stakes," *The Polish Review*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 4, 1994, pp. 393–413).

Richie's book is a substantial scholarly achievement. It is a fascinating, readable work that will, hopefully, help spread knowledge of the Warsaw Uprising, generally passed over in silence by Western historians. It may be a long read for some, but well worth the effort. The maps and illustrations are very good. One wishes, however, for a list of abbreviations, a name-and-subject index, and a timeline; the book has only an index of names. Δ

The Use and Abuse of Memory Interpreting World War II in Contemporary European Politics

Edited by Christian Karner and Bram Mertens. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2013. 284 pages. Index, illustrations. ISBN-13: 978-1412851947. \$34.73 on Amazon.com.

Patryk Babiracki

World War II had a profound impact on the consciousness of Europeans. But why the sudden proliferation of allusions to it in recent politics? In the collection of essays under review, sixteen authors study those who have been mentioning the war in European public life. The essays cover the entire postwar period, but they focus on the twenty-first century. This is part of this book's appeal: both historiography and memorialization of the war have been shaped by communism and the cold war to such a great extent that one must ask as the authors do: what new meanings, if any, have been attached to the war, and to what ends?

Classic scholarly monographs on the subject such as Jeffrey Herf's *Divided Memory* or James Young's *The Texture of Memory* place different emphases on context and texts, and therefore represent more traditional explorations of European memory of World War II within the boundaries of the respective disciplines, in this case history and art history. Furthermore, Young's study is remarkable in that it compares commemorative practices in four countries. In contrast, *The Use and Abuse of Memory* studies