

REVIEWS

Christoph Mick, *Lemberg, Lwów, L'viv, 1914–1947: Violence and Ethnicity in a Contested City*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2015. xii + 458 pp.

This is an abridged and updated translation of Professor Mick's well-received monograph in German, which came out in 2011. Compared to the German edition, the author's cuts are not significant, the excised material usually covering aspects of everyday life in Lviv not immediately related to war and ethnic reordering. The English edition also features a more detailed explanation of the author's research approach, which is based on *Erfahrungsgeschichte*, or the "history of experience." Not as widely known in English-speaking academia as it is in Germany, this trend that is associated with the work of Reinhart Koselleck calls for the close study of interaction between perceptions, actions, and their interpretations as the components of the same system, which are constantly influencing each other. Mick applies this concept to the extremely complex case of the multinational city that was called Lemberg in the Habsburg Empire, Lwów in interwar Poland, and Lviv/Lvov in the postwar Soviet Union.

Mick succeeds admirably in demonstrating that it was not necessarily the war itself but, rather, the contemporary and postwar conflicts about its meaning that sealed off the new ethnic hierarchy. To be sure, World War I helped establish ethnicity as a marker of loyalty, especially in relation to Jews and Ukrainians (Ruthenians). Yet, it was the Polish-Ukrainian war of 1918–19 that became the main construction site for Polish memory and identity in Lviv. At first a strange conflict with binational committees supervising the water works and the belligerents taking breaks in the fighting to take pictures together (pp. 151–52), it soon adopted the familiar language of "atrocities" and the use of concentration camps. When the city's Jewish community declared its neutrality, the Poles saw this act as treasonous, this perception fueling a massive and violent pogrom. During the 1920s and 1930s the competing commemorative practices of *Obrona Lwowa* ("The Defense of Lviv" in Polish) and *Lystopadovyi*

Chyn (“The November Deed” in Ukrainian) established not just two antagonistic readings of these events, but also mutually-exclusive notions of Polishness and Ukrainianness. The city’s Jews came to terms with the Polish victory by never referring in public to the pogrom—a strategy also thought to assist the healing process (pp. 233–34).

Yet, the anniversaries of the November 1918 events prompted renewed anti-Jewish violence. In a turn of events eerily foreshadowing *Kristallnacht*, in the fall of 1932 Polish student activists in Lviv called for a boycott of Jewish shops. On 12 November, when they were returning from the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to *Obrona Lwowa*, they smashed the windows of fifty-nine Jewish commercial establishments in the city center (p. 242). The Ukrainian political scene became radicalized as well. Originally established by disaffected veterans of the Ukrainian Revolution, the clandestine Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists embraced terror as a political tool. One of these Ukrainian veterans, Dmytro Paliiv, went on to establish the right-wing Front of National Unity, which even the German Embassy characterized as fascist (p. 247).

It was into this deeply polarized ethno-political scene that the Soviets arrived in the fall of 1939. Mick provides a balanced and well-informed account of their first “liberation” of Lviv, which focusses on the power of the ethnic lens. He stresses repeatedly that, in Soviet ideology, Polish domination in Eastern Galicia before 1939 was “in the first instance, social and, only in the second, national” (p. 262). Likewise, the reactions of the locals to the events in the fall of 1939 were shaped not so much by their national identification as “political and class beliefs” (p. 261). However, the local Poles and Ukrainians in particular viewed both through “ethnic patterns of perception” (p. 287). Such identification of national or religious identity with a certain kind of politics enabled the bloody ethnic conflicts of the war period, as well as the implementation of the Holocaust. Mick contrasts the Soviets’ behavior in 1939 with 1944, when they, too, embraced the ethnic lens. This time around they considered the Poles as a homogenous group of nationalists and supporters of the London government-in-exile (p. 330). This logic provided the basis for the infamous “population exchanges” between the Ukrainian

SSR and Poland, which should properly be called expulsions or deportations.

As a result of the Holocaust and these events, postwar Lviv became an overwhelmingly Ukrainian city with Russians rather than Poles or Jews emerging as the largest minority. However, Mick is rightly skeptical of the Stalinist “Ukrainization” of Lviv in 1939, as well as after 1944. He argues that the Ukrainization of 1939 was, in many respects, “only external” (p. 269), but even these measures were partly scaled back in 1946, “with priority given to Sovietization” (p. 339).

Overall, this is an excellent book, which confirms that it is productive to study East European locales over a longer period of time, including both world wars. There are a few minor mistakes that should be eliminated in any subsequent editions. Khrushchev’s first name was Nikita, not Mykola, which is the Ukrainian version of Nikolai (p. 265). The number of victims of the Polish–Ukrainian war (1918–19) is given as 25,000 on p. 183, but 20,000 in the table on p. 210. This reviewer is puzzled by the consistent use of “the Ukraïna” rather than the standard English “Ukraine.” The Library of Congress transliteration table exempts Ukrainian and Russian place names from indicating a soft sign, which should have applied to Lviv. In any case, the soft sign should have been rendered with the prime character rather than an apostrophe.

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Tarik Cyril Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City between Stalinists, Nazis, and Nationalists*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2015. 368pp.

As a borderland city with a multi-ethnic legacy, Lviv is a perennial focus of scholarly attention. The twists and turns of its history, population shifts, and successive rearrangements of the urban landscape—all this constitutes a rich field for research in various disciplines. Undoubtedly, it was the twentieth century, which brought