

extensive investigation helps the reader understand the development of Sandomierz until the present. For example, the new networks of railways constructed during the second half of the 19th century, in particular, failed to affirm and maintain the central position that the town had enjoyed compared to other cities in the region prior to these dynamic changes. It is an exemplary work in terms of shedding light on a local, urban history and its regional and global connections.

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Beyond Violence: Jewish Survivors in Poland and Slovakia, 1944–1948. By Anna Cichopek-Gajraj. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. xiii, 285 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. \$99.00, hard bound.

Although it is acknowledged that the comparative perspective is a highly desirable historical method because it often unsettles major interpretations of national history, it is rather rarely practiced. For that simple reason *Beyond Violence* is a most welcome contribution to the history of east European Jews and the consequences of the Holocaust as it aims to compare systematically the experiences of Polish and Slovak Jews in the aftermath of the Holocaust. What prompted the comparison, as the author acknowledges herself, is the distinctiveness of the Polish and Slovak political and social settings before and during the Holocaust, and the similarity in the dynamics of ethnic relations and the ultimate failure of homecoming in both cases, despite the serious attempts at rebuilding the two respective communities in the early post-1945 years.

Yet, the greatest achievement of *Beyond Violence* is the careful comparative analysis revealing specific differences between the early postwar experiences of Polish and Slovak Jews in a broader political and social context. Some of these comparisons, such as anti-Jewish violence and its contemporaneous interpretations, beg for a separate comprehensive study that will incorporate primary sources that Anna Cichopek-Gajraj had no access to and that will shift the focus of the analysis onto the social and gender aspects of violence that she briefly mentions. The subject of Jewish property restitution also begs for a broader comparative analysis in which the concept of moral obligation, or rather the lack of it, should be given a more central focus. Drawing on the important studies of Elazar Barkan on historical injustices, Cichopek-Gajraj introduces the concept of moral obligation in her analysis of the restitution of Jewish property and correctly observes that it was absent from policy-making in both postwar Poland and Slovakia. Unlike the post-1945 Slovak government, the Polish government had no fascist legacy to deal with, but still its pro-Jewish rhetoric and practice stemmed from ideological considerations rather than from any sense of rectifying historical injustices. *Beyond Violence* also demonstrates the need to further investigate not only the connection between the presence of moral obligation as a condition for effective restitution, but its lack as a link to the all-pervading anti-Jewish violence that took place, especially in early postwar Poland.

Beyond Violence consists of the introduction and seven chapters focusing on four major themes. These are: 1) the process of returning home by Jewish survivors in Poland and Slovakia and their various attempts at recreating normalcy in professional, communal and personal lives; 2) the thorny matter of demanding restitution of Jewish property (which failed); 3) the complex question of determining citizenship for Jewish survivors, especially in southern Slovakia where Hungarian-speaking Jews were seen as agents of Magyarization and thus national traitors; and 4) the anti-Jewish

violence experienced, to a varied degree, in both communities. In the conclusion, the author insists that this brief historical moment, 1945–1948, must be understood as a period in which Jewish life in eastern Europe was still an option, when Jewish survivors employed various stratagems of normalization to rebuild their shattered lives.

To paint a rich canvas of Jewish life dominated by creativity, innovation, and improvisation, Cichopek-Gajraj moves away from understanding the early postwar period through the lenses of anti-Jewish violence alone. She convincingly argues that Polish and Slovak Jews were part of a broader European project of postwar reconstruction and that they responded to this project with great enthusiasm and energy. Cichopek-Gajraj portrays the history of postwar reconstruction attempts in both Jewish communities as not only a top-down process of government policy and institutional aid, but also as a social process involving individual creativity and improvisation. To demonstrate the bottom-up innovation in the Polish case, the author uses the socially and culturally vibrant Jewish milieu in Lower Silesia—part of the newly Recovered Territories. After the infamous Kielce pogrom of July 4, 1946, the Jewish population of Poland shrank to less than half its size: out of 100,000 survivors who stayed in Poland, 50,000 lived in Lower Silesia. The region became an exemplary illustration of the successful and radical remaking of survivors into workers in Jewish cooperatives. In 1947, ninety-four of these cooperatives, or 67 % of all Jewish cooperatives created at that time, flourished there. Lower Silesia also experienced a multitude of attempts at recreating Jewish national culture that continued beyond 1949.

Cichopek-Gajraj poignantly demonstrates the Czechoslovak government did little to help its 33,000 Jewish survivors. In fact, it refused to view them as a distinct group of victims of the Nazi regime and did not aid them in recovering their citizenship and property in Slovakia. Slovak Jews had to negotiate justice on a scale incomparable to the Polish case by making constant appeals and requests and conducting daily protests. Nonetheless, they managed to recreate a community that culturally, socially, religiously and in terms of occupations in trade and small business, was largely in continuity with its interwar predecessor. In contrast to Poland, whose Jews left en masse because of anti-Jewish violence, especially in the summer of 1946, Slovak Jews left after the non-violent communist coup of February 1948. By the end of 1949, 80 percent had left and the Slovak Jewish community almost ceased to exist.

Thus the optimistic tone of *Beyond Violence*, which dwells on the possibility of homecoming and the abundance of Jewish survivors' creativity and innovation in both Poland and Slovakia, seems naïve given that the admirable attempts to rebuild their shattered lives failed as the survivors were primarily seen as unwanted ghostly others in Polish and Slovak societies alike. This book is nevertheless highly recommended not only for scholars and students of east European Jewish history and the Holocaust, but also for scholars and students of other twentieth century genocides for whom *Beyond Violence* could serve as an inspiring comparative case.

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The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945. By Joshua D. Zimmerman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. xvii, 474 pp. Appendix. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Figures. Tables. Maps. \$118.00, hard bound.

The Polish Underground refers to those resistance organizations in Nazi-occupied Poland that swore allegiance to the Polish government-in-exile. What became known as the Home Army was the military wing of the Underground; it was the largest resis-