

cooperation was not only treasonous but also key to Nazi success. After the war, as Gabriel Finder argues, creating “a path to future Jewish reconstruction” required showing that “with the exception of a small minority, all Polish Jews had exhibited high moral standards”(85), and the outliers therefore especially merited punishment. Elsewhere, shame and a desire to atone for their own passivity led to the wish of many to punish and excommunicate those who had collaborated actively. Nonetheless, as a general matter, with the passage of time, caution, if not empathy, began to displace the harsh rigor and asperity characteristic of the first courts.

Nearly destroyed, the Jewish communities of Europe needed validation. With their surviving communal organizations often weak and riven, these Jewish citizens’ tribunals were largely devoted to inquiry with a retributive rather than restorative aim. Exposure could be its own punishment, bring opprobrium and exclusion (and sometimes withholding of welfare benefits). Generally, a desire to avoid finding responsibility in oneself was strong—many individuals even presented themselves hoping to win exoneration and avoid ostracism. There were countercurrents as well, however, especially in the cases where former communal leaders and *Judenräte* members were called upon to explain their fatal and sometimes self-serving decisions. *Judenräte*-type cases often involved an element of anti-elite class conflict, yet even there, outcomes only infrequently matched intentions, and many cases, in some countries most, foundered or saw “convictions” reversed or vacated. Whether “the process” itself was salutary seems even now uncertain.

In Israel, of course, the temptation to highlight the vulnerabilities and confused loyalties of diaspora Jewish life and its leaders proved unavoidable, as the Israeli contributors demonstrate. The new state of Israel, while welcoming Nazism’s victims, to a significant degree validated itself as the negation of diaspora weakness, and trials there also served state-legitimizing purposes, albeit rather different from the successor regimes in the lands aligned with or accepting the Nazis. In retrospect, it seems difficult to believe that Jewish communities undertook to purge themselves as if they had stood on the same or similar footing as the non-Jewish communities that often conspired with the Germans in the effort to eliminate them.

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***Political Justice in Budapest after World War II.*** By Ildikó Barna and Andrea Pető.

Central European University Press: Budapest, 2015. viii, 127 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Figures. Tables. \$60.00, hard bound.

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This short book is an analysis of 500 files of court cases. The materials come from the work of the Hungarian “People’s Tribunals” from the years 1945–1949. Pető and Barna purposely eschew posing questions whether the judgments were just or not. Indeed, they examine no individual case and the reader will get little sense of how the trials actually functioned. Instead, the authors provide us with a statistical analysis of the social background, age, geographic distribution, and gender of the accused, as well as of those who made the denunciations and even those of the witnesses.

The authors’ findings are not particularly surprising, but nevertheless interesting and valuable and can be easily summarized. People from the social elite were more likely to be tried for collaborating with the Nazis, and the most prominent among them received severe punishments that made the greatest impression on the public. People from the lower classes and especially in the countryside were most frequently

accused of joining the Nyilas party (the Hungarian equivalent of the Nazis) and of taking possession of property that had belonged to Jews. In Hungary, a disproportionate number of post-war trials dealt with perpetrators of crimes committed against Jews. While only the Polish and Soviet Jewries surpassed the suffering of the Hungarian Jewry, a large number of Hungarian Jews were still alive in 1945 and were in a position to accuse their previous tormentors. In the political climate in Hungary, unlike in the Soviet Union, it was possible to point out the special suffering of Jews. Although the vast majority of the perpetrators managed to escape punishments, anti-Semites to this day have been able to depict the Tribunals as examples unfair Jewish revenge.

The authors rightly divide the period into two. In the immediate post war year, men and women were tried for crimes committed at wartime. After 1947, the People's Tribunals became one more instrument in the hands of the communist leaders, who used them against their political enemies and in order to wrest power from the previous political elite. It helped the Communists to consolidate a Soviet form of government.

In an international context, the post war punishments for political crimes were not particularly severe. A large number of people were tried but the sentences were rather light and a large percentage of the accused were not punished at all. In Hungary, no lynching took place. Probably the relative mildness of postwar punishments can be explained by recognizing that German occupation lasted for a short time and in 1944–1945, the great majority of Hungarians did not hate Germans and accordingly, cooperating with them was hardly resented.

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***Recovered Territory: A German-Polish Conflict over Land and Culture, 1919–1989.*** By Peter Polak-Springer. New York: Berghahn Books, 2015. xxi, 280 pp. Appendix. Abbreviations. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Photographs. Maps. \$100.00, hard bound. doi: 10.1017/slr.2017.31

This book examines German and Polish cultural policies in Upper Silesia—one of many European “borderlands,” created by the Versailles Peace Treaty and the Allied victory in World War II. Although Peter Polak-Springer carries his analysis forward to the postcommunist era, his main focus is the period of 1922–1953, when Upper Silesia changed hands several times, and the Polish and German governments attempted to redefine the demographic and socioeconomic profile of this multicultural region. Despite polar objectives, the methods employed by the two sides were strikingly similar in that they used irredentist culture to impose political homogeneity upon Silesia and to forge its residents into “Poles” or “Germans” (3).

To this end, the Polish interwar government, the Nazi administration, and its communist successor organized folkloric festivals, erected memorial sites, used linguistic policies, and staged plebiscites and patriotic rallies that emphasized the imminent threat across the border and the “intrinsically” national—whether German or Polish—character of the region. New media technologies such as radio and cinema were deployed to the same end, reflecting official policies and slanting the other side of violating the rights of ethnic minorities (70–71). The two governments also tried to outdo each other in erecting monumental buildings, which emphasized German or Polish cultural and economic accomplishments.

Following the 1926 coup of József Piłsudski, the new governor of Silesia Michał Grażyński deployed paramilitary groups to intimidate potential political opponents; removed ethnic Germans from managerial and executive positions in Silesian