

BERKHOFF, Karel C. — *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine Under Nazi Rule*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004. Pp. xiii, 463.

Harvest of Despair is a timely publication. Ukraine is back on a path towards democracy, tries to integrate with the Western world, and needs more attention and understanding. A history of Ukraine is mostly unknown to the Western public, even though we have excellent general histories of Ukraine written in English by Paul Robert Magocsi and Orest Subtelny. Now, Magocsi's former PhD student and an associate professor at the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam, Karel C. Berkhoff, has published a magisterial study crucial to proper understanding of the history of twentieth-century Ukraine, the Soviet Union, World War II, and the Holocaust.

Harvest of Despair consists of 12 chapters. "Soviet Ukraine and the German Invasion" describes pre-war Ukraine and its devastation during the German aggression. "The Reichskommissariat Ukraine" depicts the establishment of the Nazi authorities in the conquered territories, their new administrative divisions, the attempts to create a Ukrainian self-governing body under the auspices of the Nazis, and their plans for mass murder of the local population. "The Holocaust of the Jews and Roma" and "Prisoners of War" are devoted to the cruelest aspect of the German occupation and to Nazi racial policies. "Life in the Countryside", "Conditions in the Cities", and "Famine in Kiev" analyse the everyday life of the local population. "Popular Culture", "Ethnic Identity and Political Loyalties", and "Religion and Popular Piety" concentrate on the spiritual life of the subjugated Ukrainian population and on the German attempt to eradicate any cultural activities in the conquered territories. The chapter on the "Deportations and Forced Migrations" supplements the previous sections on Nazi racial policies and the preparations for the colonization of Ukraine with German settlers. The last chapter, "Toward the End of Nazi Rule," describes the end of the German occupation.

Berkhoff's study is a multi-ethnic territorial history of the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine, the Third Reich's largest colony, which was established in 1941 and dissolved in 1944. In the words of the author, this is "a study of all its natives" written "from the bottom up" (pp. xi–xii). The work is mostly thematic. Each chapter, which opens with a short thesis and closes with a conclusion, can be read separately. Berkhoff argues that the Nazi leadership intended to eliminate the native peoples of Ukraine to prepare its lands for German colonization. Therefore the "genocidal massacre" of Soviet prisoners of war, the famine in Kiev and other major cities of Ukraine, and terror in the countryside were not the unavoidable consequences of the war but rather a planned and deliberate Nazi policy, which caused the death of at least one million people from and in Ukraine.

The book is very well written and based on meticulous archival research. The chapters devoted to everyday life of German-occupied Ukraine are superb. They supplement previous monographs by such outstanding scholars as Gerald Reitlinger, Alexander Dallin, Amir Weiner, Yaroslav Bilinsky, and Jeffrey Burds and constitute an important contribution to the history of twentieth-century Ukraine. Some readers,

however, would understand the book better if it included more political history. The history, character, and ideology of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and activities and aspirations of Ukrainian nationalist politicians are described very briefly, and some Western readers will probably struggle with such notions as “Banderites” and “Melnykites”. Berkhoff presents the *Reichskommissariat* Ukraine as a single, so that some readers may not understand that it consisted of several regions, which in some cases were very different. Volhynia constitutes the best illustration of this phenomenon. Berkhoff writes in his preface that “The Poles of the Reichskommissariat do not take center stage.” This approach is understandable, but the observation is an understatement. Volhynia and Polissia, Poland’s provinces before 1939, became a theatre of operations of the Polish “underground state” during the war. Berkhoff ignores this issue completely. He refers to the Polish Home Army (AK) fewer than five times in the entire text and does not mention that some partisan regions were controlled by the Poles and later liberated jointly by the Red Army and the Polish underground. Also the Polish-Ukrainian conflict in Volhynia, which dominated life in this province in 1943, is depicted sketchily and with no proper references to the abundant scholarly literature on this topic. Whereas the book has numerous and substantial endnotes, it lacks a bibliography, and, since the index is rather inadequate, it is not easy to check whether the author has used some crucial primary and secondary sources.

Werner Ring, in his *Living with the Enemy*, identifies seven different German occupation policies that could be ranked from the most liberal (if this word can be applied to German occupation) to the most oppressive. At the top of this ranking was Denmark. The country was controlled by the German Foreign Office, the Danish king was allowed to spend the war in his palace, and democratic elections were held as late as 1943. Ukraine was on the other end of this spectrum, together with occupied Poland and Belarus. Berkhoff argues that in some fields the German occupation policies in Ukraine were even worse than in Poland. He also shows how the destruction caused by the Germans added to the devastation that had been previously brought to Ukraine by the Soviets. Basic knowledge about this double oppression in the past is crucial to an understanding of Ukraine’s difficult present situation. For this reason, *Harvest of Despair* is essential for anyone interested in Ukraine’s history.

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BOUVIER, Patrick — *Déserteurs et insoumis. Les Canadiens français et la justice militaire (1914–1918)*, Outremont (Québec), Athéna éditions, 2003, 149 p.

C’est dans l’indifférence presque générale que le ministre des Anciens combattants a prononcé le discours annonçant la réhabilitation d’une vingtaine de Canadiens exécutés par les autorités militaires lors de la Première Guerre mondiale, en décembre 2001. Qui dit réhabilitation, dit remise en question. Parmi eux, des Canadiens français accusés de désertion qui, contrairement à beaucoup d’autres accusés du