

inconsistent italicization of foreign words, and mismarking of GIS maps 17 through 22. Errors exist, too, in the use and citing of sources on pages 296–297 (Edward B. Westermann, *Flak: German Anti-Aircraft Defenses, 1914–1945* [2001]) and page 307 (*Hitler's Table Talk, 1941–1944* [2000 paperback edition]).

Despite such issues, Philip Blood's work is a valuable microhistory of the *Luftwaffe's* participation in Nazi extermination warfare in the East, including the Holocaust, carried out by common German soldiers trained and encouraged to hunt their victims like animals.

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The Ravine: A Family, a Photograph, a Holocaust Massacre Revealed

By Wendy Lower. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2021. Pp. 272. Hardback \$28.00. ISBN: 978-0544828698.

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Wendy Lower has structured her entire book around one photograph. It first appears on page 3. One half of it depicts a group of military men pointing rifles at a civilian woman who holds one child with her left hand and cradles another with her right. The family is a gunshot away from falling into a ravine that opens right in front of them. The gaping hole takes up the other half of the image. Its apparent emptiness is unnerving as its very purpose is to be filled with human bodies, including those of the woman and her two children we see curled up on the edge of the ravine.

Susan Sontag writes of “the repertoire of hard-to-look-at cruelties” and argues that such images carry a provocation: “can you look at this?” She suggests that “[t]here is the satisfaction of being able to look at the image without flinching. There is the pleasure of flinching” (*Regarding the Pain of Others* [2003], 41). Lower decides not to flinch and invites us to do the same. The photograph keeps coming back throughout the text in fragments that we are encouraged to inspect. Endeavouring to give names to anonymous faces to honour the memory of the victims and hold to account the perpetrators, the book has been compared to a detective story. A more fitting comparison, however, might be with a postmortem examination which attempts to establish the circumstances of death. Most of *The Ravine* is a dissection of the photograph, dated October 13, 1941 and taken in the town of Miropol (Myropil' in Ukrainian) in Nazi-occupied Ukraine.

Lower was presented with the image in 2009 while researching at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. An experienced historian, she knew this was a rare find: the “photographic record of the Holocaust is greater than that of any other genocide, incriminating photographs like this that catch the killers in the act are rare” (2). Not only does the photograph have the potential to bring those responsible for the crime to justice – it can also reveal much about the way such mass murders were made possible. The perpetrators depicted include an SS man as well as non-German collaborators, including Ukrainians, thus shedding light on the killing machine that relied on local cooperation.

As the narrative develops, however, the separation of people into perpetrators and victims proves difficult. The photographer is the first to challenge this neat division. We learn that Lubomir Škrovina was a soldier in the Slovak army, allied with Germany.

However, the photographs he took and smuggled to his wife were intended as evidence of Nazi war crimes. Rather than assuming that recording this atrocity was the work of an accomplice, Lower describes the act of photographing the event as “an expression of defiance” (91). There are also those who are not caught on film but whose invisible presence challenges the categories we use to define people involved in enabling the Shoah. Lower repeatedly refers to “the Ukrainian girls who had assisted as gravediggers” (60). These local youngsters, who remain anonymous, are described as “the lowest in the hierarchy of ‘forced laborers’ tasked with the dirty work of the Holocaust by bullets” (208).

What has come to be known as the Holocaust by bullets refers to the killing of more than 1.5 million Jews who were shot, often near their homes, in the Soviet Union. “Every fourth Jewish victim murdered in the Holocaust was from Ukraine,” writes Lower (12). Many victims remain unidentified. Their names will be forever buried in ravines like the one discussed in Lower’s book. Evidence such as Škrovina’s image can help locate the burial sites and restore at least some of the memory that has been repressed until a few decades ago in the lands that witnessed these crimes. The photograph itself was locked away in the stacks of the Security Service headquarters in Prague. “It took the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 to bring to light this image of mass murder,” writes Lower (5).

It took the collapse of the USSR and communism in East-Central Europe for stories of Jews who perished in these territories that ended up behind the Iron Curtain to begin to be discussed in the West. The most infamous ravine that was turned into a mass burial site by the Nazis is just over 200 kilometres away from Myropil’. Babyn Yar, located on the outskirts of Kyiv, witnessed the killing of more than 33,000 Jews in just two days in September 1941. Throughout the occupation of Ukraine’s capital, around 100,000 people were murdered there. The Soviet authorities chose to classify them as “peaceful citizens,” thus deliberately ignoring the racial motivation for the mass murder and obfuscating the memory of the Shoah.

Since Ukraine regained independence and its archives opened their doors to researchers, the depictions of the Holocaust that emerge in Western historiography go beyond the imagery of death camps which, despite their chilling nature, do not reveal the full scale of the atrocities of the Holocaust. The last couple of decades have also seen the population of contemporary Ukraine grapple with the complex legacy of the war, during which the inhabitants of these lands supported, resisted, and fell victim to violence. The tragedy of the loss of the Jewish population of Ukraine is slowly becoming a national tragedy for Ukrainians as a whole.

In the historiography of the Second World War, it is not uncommon to see Ukraine serve as little more than a backdrop for a crime scene. A nuanced understanding of the pre- and postwar history of the territory where so many of the victims of the Holocaust lived and died is crucial to fathom how this part of the world descended into such horrifying bloodshed. On her visit to Myropil’ in 2014, in the hope of finding the precise location of a crime perpetrated during the Second World War, Lower found herself in a Ukraine that was being engulfed by a new war. Russian aggression began in eastern Ukraine soon after the illegal annexation of the Crimea in early 2014. Lower’s driver, Anatoly, was a refugee from Luhansk, the city taken over by the Russian proxies. The history of the Second World War, including of the Holocaust and local collaboration, has been frequently weaponised by Russia in the ongoing war. Since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, photographs of new mass graves have been mounting into a body of evidence for future legal trials and scholarly research. The territory affected is the same, Ukraine, and the victims are the local residents. The perpetrators this time are the Russians. The cult of violence that is disguised in Russia as the celebration of soviet victory the “Great Patriotic War” has fuelled the committing of crimes no less heinous than those perpetrated in the Second World War. The absence of a reckoning for the atrocities committed by the Red Army in WWII and the obfuscation of the Holocaust in the post-war USSR facilitated Russia’s genocidal war against Ukraine.

“Photographs, if we choose to study them, open up questions and lead us down new paths of discovery,” argues Lower (17). As we follow her on that path, it is impossible not to recall

Sontag's work on photography. A further discussion of photography as a means of turning experience into a way of seeing, the problem of people remembering not *through* photographs but *only* the photographs, would have enriched the book (*On Photography* [1978] and *Regarding the Pain of Others*).

In an age obsessed with photographs, from Instagram food snaps to selfies posted by the armed men occupying Ukraine today, anyone with a smartphone adds to the historical record. The images can serve as evidence of crimes and culpability, they can offer us a glimpse of territories inaccessible due to occupation. They are capable of traumatising and retraumatising those affected by the violence they depict. Lower is conscious of the power that images carry, and she uses it to bring at least symbolic justice to the victims of the crime depicted in the photograph at the heart of *The Ravine*.

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Jews in Southern Tuscany during the Holocaust: Ambiguous Refuge

By Judith Roumani. New York and London: Lexington Books, 2021. Pp. 226. Hardcover \$100.00. ISBN: 978-1793629791.

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Judith Roumani's book is an extraordinary and intimate monograph on the fate of Italian Jews in one part of Tuscany of Italy. The study is based on a vast array of primary sources drawn from twenty archives in Italy, the United States, and Israel, as well as oral history interviews and correspondence with twenty Italian Holocaust survivors the author conducted between 1999 and 2018, not to mention published memoirs. It is a unique microhistory of the Holocaust that focuses on the province of Grosseto in southern Tuscany. Consisting of twenty-eight townships, Grosseto had several important Jewish communities, including those in Partigiano, Castell'Azzara, Scasano, Montalto di Castro, Grotte di Castro, Latera, Monte San Savino, Santa Fiora, Lippiano, Acquapendente, Manciano, Sorano, Città di Castello, Castell'Ottieri, and Piancastagnaio.

Examining the fate of Grosseto's Jews, Roumani finds that the evidence serves as further proof that the old "brava gente" myth of Italian innocence during the Holocaust is no longer viable. Her argument is based on the discovery that the governor of Grosseto, Alceo Ercolani, ordered the establishment of an internment camp specifically for Jews in November 1943, on his own initiative, prior to receiving instructions to do so. What's more, Roumani brings to light that the Bishop of Grosseto, Paolo Galeazzi, himself an ardent Fascist, agreed to the governor's request to rent out a Catholic seminary building in Roccatederighi for use as an internment camp specifically for Jews. As Roumani states, "this appears to have been one of the very few instances in Europe of church property that had not been requisitioned, being provided, or rented out, for what was in fact a way-station to Auschwitz" (1).

Roumani demonstrates that during the period of the Racial Laws (1938–1943), both Governor Ercolani and Bishop Galeazzi strongly supported the Fascist government and its policies on Jewish matters. She cites the May 1939 words of a Jewish university professor who had been fired from his job and banned from publishing. His career rudely cut short,