

## LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR:

Exception must be taken with some aspects of John D. Klier's review of Shmuel Krakowski's *The War of the Doomed: Jewish Armed Resistance in Poland, 1942–1944* (*Slavic Review* 44 [Winter, 1985]: 748–49).

Krakowski attributes considerable blame for the tragic fate of Jewish partisans to the “discriminatory stand of the Polish Government-in-exile and the majority of the Polish underground” (p. 301), a view Klier appears to accept when he writes, “in part the response of the KA [*sic*; AK stands for *Armia Krajowa*] and individual Poles to Jewish partisan efforts was a reflection of Polish anti-Semitism.”

Klier's position might have been different if he had taken a closer look at Krakowski's evidence. Krakowski asserts that the virulently anti-Semitic National Armed Forces (NSZ), the radical right, belonged to the AK, constituting “the largest group of registered members” (70,000) put under AK command by an underground political group. In fact it was the moderate right-wing National Military Organization (NOW) that subordinated its estimated 70,000 men to the AK. The radical right rejected this action, which ultimately gave rise to the NSZ, for which there are no reliable figures. The NSZ did not subordinate itself to the AK until 7 March 1944, a move that provoked another split. In actual fact, the NSZ was never finally merged with the AK (see *Polskie Sily Zbrojne w Drugiej Wojnie. III. Armia Krajowa*, pp. 149–159), a point that suggests that assertions about the AK being dominated by anti-Semitic political groupings should be very carefully re-examined and distinctions made.

To illustrate the AK's reputed hostility towards Jewish partisans, Krakowski cites what he claims is Order no. 116 (15 September 1943) of General Bór-Komorowski, a document that Krakowski asserts served as “official permission” for attacks on Jewish partisan units. What Krakowski actually quotes, however, is Bór-Komorowski's Organizational Report no. 220 (31 August 1943) to the Polish government-in-exile, which discusses, *inter alia*, the problem of uncontrolled bandit and partisan activity that provoked Nazi retaliation against the local civilian population. Bandits, Soviet partisans, and “men and women, especially Jewish women” are mentioned as participating in these assaults. Bór-Komorowski reports ordering local commanders to move with arms when necessary against “plundering or subversive bandit elements,” focusing upon the liquidation of the leaders but not of the entire bands.

While Bór-Komorowski was reporting to London on what he perceived to be a serious matter, the actual text of Order no. 116 sent to local commanders and now reported to be in the Archiwum Zakładu Historii Partii, differs considerably from Report no. 220, which Krakowski erroneously identifies as Order no. 116. The actual order refers to “plundering or subversive bandit elements” while not mentioning in any specific way Jews, Soviet partisans, or Polish communist partisans. Nevertheless, the Soviets and the Polish communists immediately charged (and their historians have repeated the charges) that the phrasing of Order no. 116 was so general as to permit being interpreted as recommending the liquidation of groups and partisans not subordinated to the government-in-exile. Bór-Komorowski immediately reported to London that this was not his intent. To assert that Order no. 116 was “official permission” for attacks on a specific group is, at best, debatable.

If an author's facts, figures, or text are incorrect, it is the reviewer's obligation and responsibility to point out such shortcomings. It is also the reviewer's obligation to comment, when necessary, upon scholarly methodology and apparatus. While Krakowski claims to have used “reports from the archives of Polish historical institutes in Warsaw and London” (p. x), unpublished materials from the Sikorski Historical Institute and from the Underground Poland Study Trust do not figure in either the footnotes or in the bibliography, an odd and unacceptable omission in view of Krakowski's views about both the government-in-exile and the AK. Equally odd for a translated work published in 1984

and listing works published as late as 1982 in its bibliography, is the omission of the readily available printed series, *Armia Krajowa w Dokumentach, 1939–1945*, whose five volumes were issued between 1970 and 1981. There are other omissions too numerous to list here.

History is more than one person's or one group's view and interpretation of the past. The failure to examine all sides of an issue and to use all available resources runs the grave risk of producing polemic and not scholarship.

STANISLAUS A. BLEJWAS  
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Erratum: A source was inadvertently attributed to table 2 of Beatrice Farnsworth's article "The Litigious Daughter-in-Law: Family Relations in Rural Russia in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Slavic Review* 45 (Spring 1986): 62. The table was devised by the author and no source should have been attributed to it.