

Marie Ryjáčková, *Everyday Life and Rationed War Economy in Slaný during the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (1939–1945): Administration and Everyday Life of the Local Population*, Bachelor Thesis, FHS UK, Praha 2023)

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Mgr. et Mgr. Petr Wohlmuth, Ph.D.

In her bachelor's thesis, the author focused on the issue of the wartime rationed economy in the sense of the everyday life of the historical actors in the Central Bohemian town of Slaný. The focus was on the functioning of the black market. In doing so, the author subscribed to concepts of the history of everyday life. Her grasp of the current state of research and her knowledge of relevant and up-to-date scholarly literature are all very good, including her orientation in the historical context.

In the context of case studies in the history of everyday life, there is always the problem of how to generalize and relate a given actor's experience at the micro-level to broader socio-cultural categories and phenomena. In this sense, then, the research question posed, "*How the local population of the political district of Slaný dealt with the changes implemented by the rationed war economy*," seems rather overly ambitious (p. 9). In fact, the author did a very good job of elaborating five "typical" examples, but in my opinion she was no longer able to generalize convincingly about some features of these cases and their significance. This is probably related to the fact that the presentation of the concepts of the history of everyday life mentioned in the introduction is too short, almost cursory (also and e.g. the Weber's concept of *Herrschaft*) (p. 12) and that, for example, Thomas Ellwein's concepts would really have deserved a broader presentation.

The actual core of the text is the fourth chapter, which begins with the case of "*Unregistered domestic slaughter of a pig*" (p. 28). Here the limitations of the work are already evident, as it adopts a rather descriptive-narrative mode, involving very long quotations from primary sources. The work with the primary sources is very careful, and by the standards of an undergraduate study at FHS UK it is surely well above the average, but what I find lacking in the text is the attempt to explain the case under study – and subsequent cases – in a more generalized way, in the light of the theoretical approaches outlined in the introduction to the thesis. The same applies to the following cases. I therefore miss a more explicit problem-analytical level in the thesis.

The conclusion of the thesis, presented on pages 52–54, is more a brief recapitulation of the cases studied, again of a rather descriptive nature. It is possible to agree that the detailed examination of the five cases from Slaný has enabled a deeper knowledge of everyday life in that locality at that historical time to be gained, but the author's only analytical conclusion, i.e. that the research had shown that "*Czech office clerks operated a bureaucratic system*", is of a very basic nature (p. 54).

I would therefore like to ask the author the following three questions:

1) What are the various ways in which officials of the bureaucratic apparatus in Slaný responded to cases in question? Is it possible to create some even provisional list of ideal types?

2) Is it possible to more elaborate on the hypothesis that, in comparison with the district of Kladno, officials from the district of Slaný actually fulfilled Ellwein's

concept of "*lernende Verwaltung*"?

3) Is it possible to present any provisional typology of defense strategies for those guilty of transgressions against the rationed economy to avoid sanctions for their actions?

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The work under review appears in many aspects to be visibly superior in the context of the undergraduate studies at the FHS UK. It is very carefully "crafted" in terms of archival research. I consider its weakness to be that, despite subscribing to certain theoretical concepts, most of the content is constructed in a simple descriptive-narrative manner and the thesis contains just a few analytical statements. For this reason, **I recommend the thesis for defense and suggest a grade either very good (2) or excellent (1)**, based on the author's performance during the defense.

In Prague, 3 September 2023

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