

and obeying the Germans, they would survive, as the message of “work to live” had been conveyed to them all along by the head of the *Judenrat* Jacob Gens (who was murdered by the Nazis a short time before the ghetto’s liquidation). In Łódź, it was the controversial personality of leader Chaim Mordechaj Rumkowski that made people resist him rather than against the Nazis. There was no armed resistance inside the ghetto; however, “Jews did fight back – but not with weapons” (202).

Armed resistance was only one potential course of action that the Jews could have taken. They also chose other responses, such as escape, suicide, prayer, or spiritual resistance, in various ways. Armed resistance was the preferred response, mainly among the young who did not have families to care for. “Importantly, the fighters did not choose resistance to save their lives. On the contrary, they were sure that they would all perish,” (90) so with no hope of success and a firm belief that they would die, Einwohner asks: why did they resist? She argues that Jews fought back precisely because they lacked opportunity and resources. With no hope for survival, they reached the critical conclusion of hopelessness that, ironically, made resistance possible. They equated resistance with honor; they would be the ones to choose the way they died, and, for them, it was better to die in battle than to submit meekly to Nazi aggression. Resistance was also a resonant response to the threat of genocide because it was the enactment of an identity: Jews chose to be seen as strong and proud people, and not the weak sub-humans as they were portrayed by the Nazis.

The author’s much-appreciated methodology includes an impressive collection of short entries selected from video testimonies of Holocaust survivors. Einwohner meticulously watched about 120 testimonies of the USC Shoah Foundation and excerpted segments about resistance and other relevant topics, told in the original voice of the survivors. This certainly provides added value to her research and conclusions. The author also dedicates an appendix to the “Data Sources” she used, describing the nature of the sources, giving a special tribute to the famous and unique project of collecting video testimonies in the 1990s.

Although no new historical revelations appear in this book, it does present an interesting and important contribution as it offers a new pivotal point on a rather well-researched subject that can add to interdisciplinary research of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust and bring it to new directions of study. It offers a broader perspective and adds additional layers to the attempt to explain Jewish resistance during the darkest time of the Holocaust.

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## **The Anarchy of Nazi Memorabilia: From Things of Tyranny to Troubled Treasure**

**By Michael Hughes. London and New York: Routledge, 2022. Pp. 260. Hardcover \$170.00. ISBN 978-0367422004.**

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The post-1945 legacy of the Third Reich’s material culture has seen increasing attention in recent years from historians as well as from other scholars. Noteworthy studies have focused on the built environment, including not only Nazi monuments such as the Nuremberg Nazi party rally grounds (Sharon MacDonald, *Difficult Heritage* [2000]) but also physical remnants

which are somewhat less obviously politically coded (Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces* [2000]). The postwar fate of smaller political symbols like the swastika flag, Nazi party badges, or various military medals, disseminated by the millions during the Third Reich, has received much less scholarly attention. The reluctance to study the legacy of small Nazi objects might be connected to their continual existence in the private sphere, a reality that many of us perceive as upsetting, let alone when this reality comes in the form of private collections. A recent study pays attention to these objects from the perspective of museum exhibitions (Chloe Paver, *Exhibiting the Nazi Past* [2018]). Seriously exploring what happened to Nazi objects after the war and how their meanings and functions evolved in different social and political contexts outside museums holds the promise, however, of telling us something different and possibly important about the complex cultural effects of National Socialism both in Germany and beyond. Michael Hughes's *The Anarchy of Nazi Memorabilia* certainly brings to the fore the huge moral challenge which the existence of these objects in private hands represents and why we should care about this topic, both as scholars and as citizens.

The book mainly conceptualizes things as – social and economic – commodities. But how much does it help to attempt tracing Nazi objects, following Arjun Appadurai, “from commodity production to commodity consumption” (4) when, as Hughes is well aware, these things’ meanings, functions, and social effects are so intrinsically intertwined with the political system of Nazism, and this system’s complex afterlife, that it makes them a very special kind of “commodity”? In the same vein, Michael Thompson’s categories of a transient, rubbish, or durable state of objects aims to understand the social and economic value of objects in different contexts and situations but pays no attention to the specificities of objects that are meant to represent a certain definition of the social as a whole, which is precisely what makes Nazi symbols a problematic legacy. Leora Auslander’s work on *Cultural Revolutions* (2009) would have been a more useful guide for this aspect of the book. The author eventually resorts to describing Nazi objects as “metaphysically toxic artefacts” (134, 143). This seems a fitting enough expression, but since the metaphysical is withdrawn from our historical understanding, it does not really open doors to more interesting historical questions about what the cultural experience of this metaphysical toxicity entails and how precisely its historical emergence relates to the emergence of the collectors’ market. The less theorized thread which, however, shapes much of the book is about the moral dilemma the experience of the “metaphysically toxic” produces.

Michael Hughes asks both how Nazi symbols contributed to the creation of the Third Reich and how they subsequently “managed to be transformed” from their original function “into highly prized collectors’ items?” (3) The first half of the book presents a historical overview of a number of symbolic items, from the introduction of swastika flags and Nazi party badges during the Weimar years, via badges connected to the Nazi *Volksgemeinschaft* programs, to, finally, a number of medals and awards that shaped the war enterprise. Combining what is known from literature with often insightful quotes from additional materials such as novels, these sections provide an informative and useful overview. Hughes contextualizes the objects in their time while also including often neglected technical and economic aspects such as the materials used or who produced the objects and how. Chapters regularly include a discussion of these items’ recent fate on the collectors’ market and that market’s own economic rationality in which the development of prizes is connected to a certain notion of authenticity that, for instance, makes Nazi daggers only valuable if they still carry the swastika and not if that symbol’s absence testifies to the postwar denazification of the object. Hughes often points to the myriad ways in which these objects carry traces of violence yet simultaneously hide these traces, especially in the collectors’ fetishizing gaze, thus representing the central moral dilemma.


The second half of the book briefly describes the postwar transition, the denazification efforts in Germany, the practice by Allied soldiers of taking Nazi symbols as war trophies or souvenirs, and the legal situation around Nazi symbols in Germany, the UK, the US,

and France. The following discussion of (several decades of) this market contains the most original material, based in part on interviews that the author conducted with a number of collectors. We learn that their interest in Nazi objects often started in their childhoods, that they usually distance themselves from Nazism, yet have often derived not only their collection material but often also their information and background stories from former Wehrmacht soldiers or SS members. Much that would be interesting to explore further is only hinted at in passing, such as the importance of feature films for generating collectors' interest in Nazi symbols, the relationship between different phases in international Holocaust memory, and the evolution of collecting and trading, as well as the importance of different national contexts for what collecting means in Germany, the US, and the UK. The author's most important conclusion is a moral one: collections of Nazi symbols should not be owned privately but belong in museums.

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## The Streets Echoed with Chants: The Urban Experience of Post-War West Berlin

**By Laura Bowie. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2022. Pp. xxiv + 302. Paperback \$70.00. ISBN: 978-1789975819.**

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I have never been to Märkisches Viertel, the suburban satellite district constructed in post-war West Berlin that is the object of Laura Bowie's study. Still, Bowie's analysis of local '68ers' intellectual debates that surrounded its conceptualization, construction, and use feels familiar. Indeed, she mentions Vällingby, my neighboring district in Stockholm, as the Swedish example of a similar urban form: an area of apartments and facilities built in concrete, isolated from the rest of the city due to Western, postmodern city planning that focused on an urban separation of functions. Many historical differences exist between Berlin and Stockholm, particularly in relation to the German city's difficult past. Still, Bowie's microhistory of the architectural student group *Aktion 507* and its criticism of Märkisches Viertel through the exhibition *Diagnose* in 1968 touches upon issues that many European urban societies had to work through at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. How to make cities sociable and democratic after the Second World War's legacy of physical and moral destruction? And while much had been destroyed, how to tackle existing areas with old tenements in relation to groups of socio-economic vulnerability? Berlin, a "pressure-cooker" for revolution (9), serves as the ultimate case study to upbraid and analyze the various solutions proposed and discussed by city planners, architects, and intellectuals.

To do this, Bowie explores artistic responses within the '68 student protest movement to the "lived experience" of new urban spaces. Her material is fascinating and expansive: magazine articles and photographs, interviews and correspondence, autobiographies and memoirs, contemporary theoretical works, and especially catalogues and displays from *Diagnose* facilitate an intimate analysis of the students' reconceptualization of the architectural profession as primarily social agents, and designers only secondarily. With suburban Märkisches Viertel as lens, Bowie portrays how the protagonists used this new form of urban space to, firstly, argue against the presumed relocation of social problems through authoritarian and