

The Jewish Holocaust

INTRODUCTION

The genocide of European Jews – which many scholars and others call simply “the Holocaust”¹ – “is perhaps the one genocide of which every educated person has heard.”² Between 1941 and 1945, five to six million Jews were systematically murdered by the Nazi regime, its allies, and its surrogates in the Nazi-occupied territories.³ Yet despite the extraordinary scale and intensity of the genocide, its prominence in recent decades was far from preordained. The Second World War killed upwards of fifty million people in all, and attitudes following the Nazi defeat tended to mirror those during the war, when Western leaders and publics generally refused to ascribe special urgency to the Jewish catastrophe. Only with the Israeli capture of Adolf Eichmann, the epitome of the “banality of evil” in Hannah Arendt’s famous phrase, and his trial in Jerusalem in 1961, did the Jewish *Shoah* (catastrophe) begin to entrench itself as the paradigmatic genocide of human history. Even today, in the evaluation of genocide scholar Yehuda Bauer, “the impact of the Holocaust is growing, not diminishing.”⁴

This impact is expressed in the diverse debates about the Holocaust. Among the questions asked are: How could the systematic murder of millions of helpless individuals have sprung from one of the most developed and “civilized” of Western states? What are the links to European anti-semitism? How central a figure was Adolf Hitler in the genesis and unfolding of the slaughter? What part did “ordinary men” and “ordinary Germans” play in the extermination campaign? How extensive was Jewish resistance? What was the role of the Allies (notably Britain, France, the USSR, and the United States), both before and during the Second World War, in abandoning

Jews to destruction at Nazi hands? And what is the relationship between the Jewish Holocaust and the postwar state of Israel? This chapter addresses these issues in its later sections, while also alighting on the debate over the alleged “uniqueness” of the *Shoah*.

ORIGINS

Until the later nineteenth century, Jews were uniquely stigmatized within the European social hierarchy, often through stereotypical motifs that endure, in places, to the present.⁵ Medieval Christianity “held the Jews to violate the moral order of the world. By rejecting Jesus, by allegedly having killed him, the Jews stood in defiant opposition to the otherwise universally accepted conception of God and Man, denigrating and defiling, by their very existence, all that is sacred. As such, Jews came to represent symbolically and discursively much of the evil in the world.”⁶ Jews – especially male Jews – were reviled as “uprooted, troublesome, malevolent, shiftless” (see pp. 488–90).⁷

The Catholic Church, and later the Protestant offshoot founded by the virulently anti-semitic Martin Luther, assailed Jews as “thirsty bloodhounds and murderers of all Christendom.”⁸ The most primitive and powerful myth was the so-called “blood

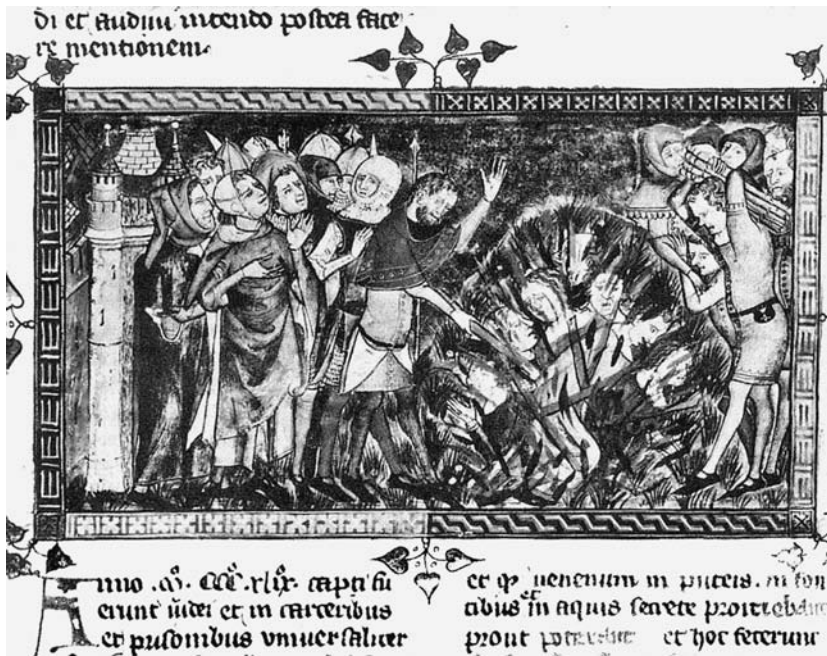


Figure 6.1 Jews were scapegoated and persecuted by many Christian regimes and populations in Europe. A medieval manuscript depicts a mass burning of Jews in 1349 as “punishment” for supposedly colluding with demonic forces to bring the Black Death (bubonic plague) to European shores.

Source: H.H. Ben-Sasson, ed., *A History of the Jewish People*/Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 6.2 The Nazis revived and vigorously inculcated anti-semitic stereotypes. This front page of the propaganda newspaper *Der Stürmer* (*The Attacker*) depicts innocent Aryan womanhood being ritually murdered (*Ritualmord*) and drained of blood by the demonic Jewish male.

Source: St. Brendan School Network.

libel”: the claim that Jews seized and murdered Gentile children in order to use their blood in the baking of ceremonial bread for the Passover celebration.⁹ Fueled by this and other fantasies, anti-Jewish *pogroms* – localized campaigns of violence, killing, and repression – scarred European Jewish history. At various points, Jews who refused to convert to Christianity were also rounded up and expelled, most notoriously from Spain and Portugal in 1492.¹⁰

The rise of modernity and the nation-state recast traditional anti-semitism in new and contradictory guises. (The term “anti-semitism” is a product of this era, coined by the German Wilhelm Marr in 1879.) On one hand, Jews were viewed as *enemies* of modernity. Cloistered in the cultural isolation of ghetto (to which previous generations had consigned them), they could never be truly part of the nation-state, which was rapidly emerging as the fulcrum of modern identity.¹¹ On the other hand, for sectors suspicious of or threatened by change, Jews were seen as dangerous *agents* of modernity: as key players in oppressive economic institutions; as urban, cosmopolitan elements who threatened the unity and identity of the *Volk* (people).

It would be misleading, however, to present European history as one long campaign of discrimination and repression against Jews. For several centuries Jews in Eastern Europe “enjoyed a period of comparative peace, tranquility and the flowering of Jewish religious life.”¹² They were even more prominent, and valued, in Muslim Spain. Moreover, ideologies of nationalism sometimes followed the liberal “melting-pot” motif exemplified by the United States. Those Jews who sought integration with their societies could be accepted. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are seen as something of a golden age for Jews in France, Britain, and Germany, even while some two-and-a-half million Jews were fleeing pogroms in tsarist Russia.

Germany was widely viewed as one of the more tolerant European societies; Prussia, the first German state to grant citizenship to its Jews, did so as early as 1812. How, then, could Germany turn first to persecuting, then to slaughtering, nearly

two-thirds of the Jews of Europe? Part of the answer lies in the fact that, although German society was in many ways tolerant and progressive, German politics was never liberal or democratic, in the manner of both Britain and France.¹³ Moreover, German society was deeply destabilized by defeat in the First World War, and by the imposition of a humiliating peace settlement at Versailles in 1919. Germany was forced to shoulder full blame for the outbreak of the “Great War.” It lost its overseas colonies, along with some of its European territories; its armed forces were reduced to a fraction of their former size; and onerous reparations were demanded. “A tidal wave of shame and resentment, experienced even by younger men who had not seen military service, swept the nation,” wrote Richard Plant. “Many people tried to digest the bitter defeat by searching furiously for scapegoats.”¹⁴ These dark currents ran beneath the political order, the Weimar Republic, established after the war. Democratic but fragile, it presided over economic chaos – first, the hyperinflation of 1923, which saw the German mark slip to 4.2 trillion to the dollar, and then the widespread unemployment of the Great Depression, beginning in 1929.

The result was political extremism. Its prime architect and beneficiary was the NSDAP (the National Socialist or “Nazi” party), founded by Adolf Hitler and sundry alienated colleagues. Hitler, a decorated First World War veteran and failed artist from Vienna, assumed the task of resurrecting Germany and imposing its hegemony on all Europe. This vision would lead to the deaths of tens of millions of people. But it was underpinned in Hitler’s mind by an epic hatred of Jews – “these black parasites of the nation,” as he called them in *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), the tirade he penned while in prison following an abortive coup attempt in 1923.¹⁵

As the failed *putsch* indicated, Hitler’s path to power was far from direct. By 1932, he seemed to many to have passed his peak. The Nazis won only a minority of parliamentary seats in that year’s elections; more Germans voted for parties of the Left than of the Right. But divisions between the Socialists and Communists made the Nazis the largest single party in the Reichstag, and allowed Hitler to become Chancellor in January 1933.

Once installed in power, the Nazis proved unstoppable. Within three months, they had seized “total control of [the] German state, abolishing its federalist structure, dismantling democratic government and outlawing political parties and trade unions.” The Enabling Act of March 23, 1933 gave Hitler “*carte blanche* to terrorize and neutralize all effective political opposition.”¹⁶ Immediately thereafter, the Nazis’ persecutory stance towards Jews became plain. Within a few months, Jews saw their businesses placed under Nazi boycott; their mass dismissal from hospitals, the schools, and the civil service; and public book-burnings of Jewish and other “degenerate” works. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 stripped Jews of citizenship and gave legal shape to the Nazis’ race-based theories: intermarriage or sexual intercourse between non-Jews and Jews was prohibited.

With the Nuremberg edicts, and the threat of worse measures looming, increasing numbers of Jews fled abroad. The abandonment of homes and capital in Germany meant penury abroad – the Nazis would allow only a fraction of one’s wealth to be exported. The unwillingness of the outside world to accept Jewish refugees meant that many more Jews longed to leave than actually could. Hundreds of those who remained committed suicide as Nazi rule imposed upon them a “social death.”¹⁷



Figure 6.3 “Germans pass by the broken shop window of a Jewish-owned business that was destroyed during Kristallnacht,” Berlin, November 10, 1938. While many Germans strongly supported the Nazis’ anti-semitic policies, many also bridled at the violence of the “Night of Broken Glass,” and the “un-German” disorder it typified. The Nazis monitored public opinion carefully, and such sentiments prompted them, when the time came to impose a “final solution of the Jewish problem,” to “outsource” the mass extermination process to the occupied territories in Poland and the USSR.

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum/National Archives and Records Administration.

The persecution mounted further with the *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass) on November 9–10, 1938, “a proto-genocidal assault”¹⁸ that targeted Jewish properties, residences, and persons. Several dozen Jews were killed outright, billions of deutschemarks in damage was inflicted, and some 30,000 male Jews were rounded up and imprisoned in concentration camps. Now attempts to flee increased dramatically, but this occurred just as Hitler was driving Europe towards crisis and world war, and as Western countries all but closed their frontiers to Jewish would-be emigrants.

“ORDINARY GERMANS” AND THE NAZIS

In recent years, a great deal of scholarly energy has been devoted to Hitler's and the Nazis' evolving relationship with the German public. Two broad conclusions may be drawn from the work of Robert Gellately, Eric Johnson, and David Bankier – and also from one of the most revelatory personal documents of the Nazi era, the diaries of Victor Klemperer (1881–1960). (Klemperer was a Jew from the German city of Dresden who survived the Nazi period, albeit under conditions of privation and persecution, thanks to his marriage to an “Aryan” woman.)

The first insight is that Nazi rule, and the isolation of the Jews for eventual expulsion and extermination, counted on a broad wellspring of popular support. This was based on Hitler's pledge to return Germany to social order, economic stability, and world-power status. The basic thesis of Gellately's book, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*, is that “Hitler was largely successful in getting the backing, one way or another, of the great majority of citizens.” Moreover, this was based on the anathematizing of whole classes of citizens: “the Germans generally turned out to be proud and pleased that Hitler and his henchmen were putting away certain kinds of people who did not fit in, or who were regarded as ‘outsiders,’ ‘asocials,’ ‘useless eaters,’ or ‘criminals.’”¹⁹

Victor Klemperer's diaries provide an “extraordinarily acute analysis of the day-to-day workings of German life under Hitler” and “a singular chronicle of German society's progressive Nazification.”²⁰ Klemperer oscillated between a conviction that German society had become thoroughly Nazified, and the ironic conviction (given his expulsion from the body politic) that the Germany he loved would triumph. “I certainly no longer believe that [the Nazi regime] has enemies inside Germany,” he wrote in May 1936. “The majority of the people is content, a small group accepts Hitler as the lesser evil, no one really wants to be rid of him. . . . And all are afraid for their livelihood, their life, all are such terrible cowards.” Yet as late as March 1940, with the Second World War well underway, “I often ask myself where all the wild anti-Semitism is. For my part I encounter much sympathy, people help me out, but fearfully of course.” He noted numerous examples of verbal contempt, but also a surprising number of cases where colleagues and acquaintances went out of their way to greet him warmly, and even police officers who accorded him treatment that was “very courteous, almost comically courteous.” “Every Jew has his Aryan angel,” one of his fellow inmates in an overcrowded communal house told him in 1941. But by then Klemperer had been stripped of his job, pension, house, and typewriter; he would shortly lose his right to indulge even in his cherished cigarettes. In September 1941, he was forced to put on a yellow Star of David identifying him as a Jew. It left him feeling “shattered”: nearly a year later, he would describe the star as “torture – I can resolve a hundred times to pay no attention, it remains torture.”²¹ Hundreds of miles to the east, the program of mass killing was gearing up, as Klemperer and other Jews – not to mention ordinary Germans – were increasingly aware.

If Jews came to be the prime targets of Nazi demonization and marginalization, they were not the only ones, and for some years they were not necessarily the main ones. Communists (depicted as closely linked to Jewry) and other political opponents, handicapped and senile Germans, homosexuals, Roma (Gypsies), Polish intellectuals,

vagrants, and other “asocial” elements all occupied the attention of the Nazi authorities during this period, and were the victims of “notorious achievements in human destruction” exceeding the persecution of the Jews until 1941.²² Of these groups, political opponents (especially communists) and the handicapped and senile were most at risk of extreme physical violence, torture, and murder. “The political and syndical [trade union] left,” wrote Arno Mayer, “remained the principal target of brutal repression well past the time of the definitive consolidation of the new regime in July–August 1934.”²³ In the slaughter of the handicapped, meanwhile, the Nazis first “discovered that it was possible to murder multitudes,” and that “they could easily recruit men and women to do the killings.”²⁴ Box 6a explores the fate of political oppositionists and the handicapped under Nazi rule in greater detail.

THE TURN TO MASS MURDER

I also took part in the day before yesterday’s huge mass killing [of Jews in Belorussia] . . . When the first truckload [of victims] arrived my hand was slightly trembling when shooting, but one gets used to this. When the tenth load arrived I was already aiming more calmly and shot securely at the many women, children and infants. . . . Infants were flying in a wide circle through the air and we shot them still in flight, before they fell into the pit and into the water. Let’s get rid of this scum that tossed all of Europe into the war . . .

Walter Mattner, a Viennese clerk recruited for service in the *Einsatzgruppen* during the “Holocaust by Bullets”; letter to his wife (!), October 5, 1941

Between the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 and the onset of full-scale extermination in mid-1941, the Nazis were busy consolidating and confining the Jews under their control. The core policy in the occupied territories of the East was *ghettoization*: confinement of Jews in overcrowded neighborhoods of major cities. One could argue that with ghettoization came genocidal intent: “The Nazis sought to create inhuman conditions in the ghettos, where a combination of obscene overcrowding, deliberate starvation . . . and outbreaks of typhus and cholera would reduce Jewish numbers through ‘natural wastage.’”²⁵ Certainly, the hundreds of thousands of Jews who died in the ghettos are numbered among the victims of the Holocaust.

In the two years following the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, some 1.8 million Jews were rounded up and murdered, mostly by point-blank rifle fire, in what the Catholic priest Patrick Desbois has dubbed “the Holocaust by bullets.” (For more on Desbois’s activism and on this phase of the Holocaust, see Chapter 14.) The direct genocidal agents included the so-called *Einsatzgruppen*, four death-squad battalions – some 3,000 men in all – who followed behind the regular German army.²⁶ They were accompanied by SS formations and police units filled out with middle-aged recruits plucked from civilian duty in Germany – such as the “ordinary men” of Reserve Police Battalion 101, studied by both historian Christopher Browning and political scientist Daniel Goldhagen (see “Further Study”; Figures 6.10–6.11). Most of the killings occurred before the machinery of

industrial killing was erected in the death camps of Occupied Poland in spring 1942. They continued mercilessly thereafter, hunting down the last Jews still in flight or hiding. Bruno Mayrhofer, a German gendarme in Ukraine, reported that

On 7 May 1943, 21.00 hours, following a confidential report [*n.b.* probably by a Ukrainian collaborator], 8 Jews, that is 3 men, 2 women and 3 children were flushed out of a well-camouflaged hole in the ground in an open field not far from the post here, and all of them were [“]shot while trying to escape[”]. This case concerned Jews from Pohrebyshche who had lived in this hole in the ground for almost a year. The Jews did not have anything else in their possession except their tattered clothing. . . . The burial was carried out immediately on the spot.²⁷

The role of the regular German army, or *Wehrmacht*, in this eruption of full-scale genocide was noted at the Nuremberg trials of 1945–46 (see Chapter 15). However, in part because the Western allies preferred to view the *Wehrmacht* as gentlemanly opponents, and subsequently because the German army was reconstructed as an ally by both sides in the Cold War, a myth was cultivated that the *Wehrmacht* had acted “honorably” in the occupied territories. Scholarly inquiry has now demonstrated that this is “a wholly false picture of the historical reality.”²⁸ Permeated to the core by the Nazis’ racist ideology, the *Wehrmacht* was key to engineering the mass murder of



Figure 6.4 Soviet Jews gathered in a ravine prior to their mass execution by *Einsatzgruppen* killing units during the “Holocaust by Bullets,” 1941–42.

Source: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej/US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

3.3 million Soviets seized as prisoners-of-war (see Box 6a).²⁹ The *Wehrmacht* was also central to the perpetration of the Jewish Holocaust. The *Einsatzgruppen*, wrote Hannah Arendt, “needed and got the close cooperation of the Armed Forces; indeed, relations between them were usually ‘excellent’ and in some instances ‘affectionate’ (*herzlich*, literally ‘heartfelt’). The generals . . . often lent their own men, ordinary soldiers, to assist in the massacres.”³⁰ A great many soldiers “felt drawn to the killing operations . . . standing around as spectators, taking photographs, and volunteering to be shooters.”³¹ As SS Lieutenant-Colonel Karl Kretschmer wrote home in September 1942: “Here in Russia, wherever the German soldier is, no Jew remains.”³²

Even such intensive slaughter, however, could not eliminate European Jewry in a “reasonable” time. Moreover, the intensely intimate character of murder by gunfire, with human tissue and brain matter spattering onto the clothes and faces of the German killers, began to take a psychological toll. The difficulty was especially pronounced in the case of murders of children and women. While it was relatively easy for executioners to persuade themselves that adult male victims, even unarmed civilians, were dangerous and deserved their cruel fate, the argument was harder to make for people traditionally viewed as passive, dependent, and helpless.³³

To reduce this stress on the killers, and to increase the logistical efficiency of the killing, the industrialized “death camp” with its gas chambers was moved to the fore. Both were refinements of existing institutions and technologies. The death camps grew out of the concentration-camp system the Nazis had established upon first taking power in 1933, while killings by gas were first employed in 1939 as part of the “euthanasia” campaign that was such a vital forerunner of the genocide of the Jews. (It was wound down, in fact, at the precise point that the campaign against European Jews turned to root-and-branch extermination.) Gas chambers allowed for the desired psychological distance between the killers and their victims: “It was the gas that acted, not the man who pulled the machine-gun trigger.”³⁴

Principally by this means, nearly one million Jews were killed at Auschwitz – a complex of three camps and numerous satellites, of which Auschwitz II (Birkenau) operated as the main killing center. Zyklon B (cyanide gas in crystal form) was overwhelmingly the means of murder at Auschwitz. Nearly two million more Jews died by gas, shootings, beatings, and starvation at the other “death camps” in occupied Poland, which were distinguished from the vastly larger Nazi network of concentration camps by their core function of extermination. These death camps were Chelmno (200,000 Jews slaughtered); Sobibor (260,000); Belzec (500,000); Treblinka (800,000, mostly from the Polish capital Warsaw); and Majdanek (130,000).³⁵

It would be misleading to distinguish too sharply between the “death camps,” where gas was the normal means of extermination, and the broader network of camps where “destruction through work” (the Nazis’ term) was the norm.³⁶ Killings of Jews reached exterminatory levels in the latter institutions as well. As Daniel Goldhagen has argued, “after the beginning of 1942, the camp system in general was lethal for Jews,” and well over a million died outside the death camps, killed by starvation, disease, and slave labor.³⁷ Perhaps 500,000 more, in Raul Hilberg’s estimate, succumbed in the Jewish ghettos, themselves a kind of concentration camp. Finally, tens of thousands died on forced marches, often in the dead of winter, as Allied forces closed in.³⁸

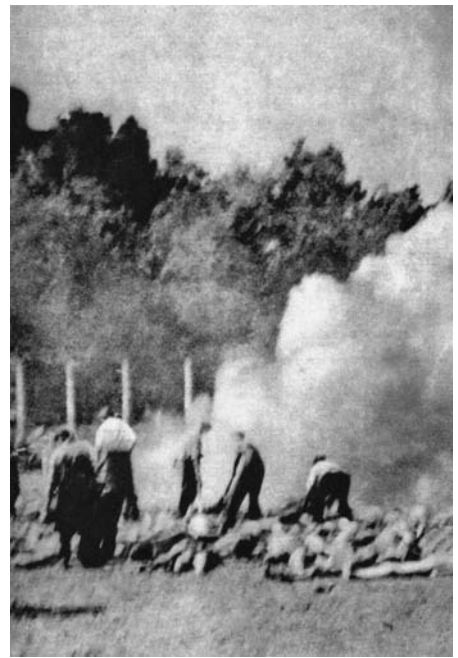


Map 6.1 The Holocaust in Europe
 Source: Map by Dennis Nilsson/Wikimedia Commons.



Figure 6.5 The haunting ruins of the Crematorium III death factory at Auschwitz II-Birkenau outside Oswiecim, Poland, dynamited by the Nazis just before the camp was liberated by Soviet soldiers in January 1945. The view is looking down the steps which victims, mostly Jews transported from all over Europe, were forced to tread en route to the undressing room within. They were then murdered in an underground gas chamber (at top left, not clearly visible), and cremated in ovens under the (now-collapsed) roof-and-chimney complex at the rear. More than one million children, women, and men – overwhelmingly Jews, but also Roma/Gypsies and Soviet prisoners-of-war – were murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The site has become synonymous with the Jewish Holocaust and modern genocide.

Source: Author's photo, November 2009.



Figures 6.6–6.9 Four indelible images of the Jewish Holocaust. *Top left:* A Jewish man is murdered by pistol fire at a death pit outside Vinnytsia, Ukraine, during the “Holocaust by Bullets” of 1941–42. *Top right:* Near Novgorod, Russia, in 1942, a German soldier takes aim at civilian victims in the killing fields; the rifles of other members of the execution squad are partially visible at left (note also the victim – wounded? killed? – lying by the soldier’s right foot). *Bottom left:* After the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of January–May 1943, Jewish survivors are rounded up for transport and extermination. *Bottom right:* In the final stages of the Holocaust, the death factories worked overtime to “process” victims, above all Jews, even when this diverted resources from the Nazi war effort. A member of a *Sonderkommando* corpse-disposal unit in Auschwitz II-Birkenau (see Figure 6.5) surreptitiously photographed the burning of the bodies of gassed victims, probably Jews from the last major genocidal roundup in Hungary, in an open pit near Crematorium V (May 1944).

Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Notoriously, the extermination system continued to function even when it impeded the war effort. In March 1944, the Nazis intervened to occupy Hungary as a bulwark against advancing Soviet forces. Adolf Eichmann promptly arrived to supervise the rounding up for slaughter of the country's Jews. Thousands were saved by the imaginative intervention of Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg (see Chapter 10). But some 400,000 were packed off to be gassed at Auschwitz-Birkenau and other death camps – despite the enormous strain this imposed on the rail system and the Nazis' dwindling human and material resources. It seemed that the single-minded devotion to genocidal destruction outweighed even the Nazis' desire for self-preservation.

BOX 6.1 ONE WOMAN'S STORY: NECHAMA EPSTEIN

Nechama Epstein was a Polish Jew from Warsaw who was just 18 years old when she “and her family were herded into the city's ghetto together with 350,000 other Jews.”³⁹ One of the few survivors of the Auschwitz death camp, she was interviewed after the war by David P. Boder, an American psychologist who published a book entitled *I Did Not Interview the Dead*. However, Boder chose not to include his conversation with Epstein; her testimony did not see the light of day until it was excerpted in Donald Niewyk's chapter for the *Century of Genocide* anthology. Her account, Niewyk noted, “reveals a remarkable breadth of experiences, including survival in ghettos, slave labor camps, and extermination centers.”⁴⁰

Epstein described the grim privations of life in the Warsaw ghetto – the very ghetto that would rise up so heroically against the Germans in early 1943, and be crushed. “It was very bad,” she remembered. “We had nothing to sell any more. Eight people were living on a kilo of beets a day. . . . We did not have any more strength to walk. . . . Every day there were other dead, small children, bigger children, older people. All died of a hunger death.”

Epstein was caught up in the mass round-up of Jews to be shipped to the extermination center at Treblinka in September 1942. Packed into a single cattle-car with 200 other Jews, she passed an entire night before the train began to move: “We lay one on top of the other. . . . One lay suffocating on top of another. . . . We could do nothing to help ourselves. And then real death began.” Tormented by thirst and near-asphyxiation, Jews struggled with each other for a snatch of air or any moisture. “Mothers were giving the children urine to drink.”

Some enterprising prisoners managed to saw a hole in the cattle-car, and Epstein, among others, leapt out. With the help of a Polish militia member, she found her way to the Miedryzecz ghetto, where she passed the next eight months. “Every four weeks there were new deportations.” The first of these she survived by hiding in an

attic and eating raw beets. "I did not have anything to drink. The first snow fell then, so I made a hole in the roof and pulled in the hand a little snow. And this I licked. And this I lived on."

Her luck ran out at the time of the last deportation. She was led away, to a transport and apparently her doom, on "a beautiful summer day" in 1943. This time the destination was Majdanek, another of the extermination centers in occupied Poland. There, "We were all lined up. There were many who were shot [outright]. . . . The mothers were put separately, the children separately, the men separately, the women separately. . . . The children and the mothers were led to the crematory. All were burned. . . . We never laid eyes on them again."

She spent two months at Majdanek. "I lived through many terrible things. We had nothing to eat. We were so starved. . . . The food consisted of two hundred grams of bread a day, and a little soup of water with nettles." A German SS woman entered the barracks every day "at six in the morning . . . beating everybody."

In July 1943, Epstein was shipped off to Auschwitz. By good fortune, she was consigned to a work camp rather than to immediate extermination in the Birkenau gas chambers. "We worked carrying stones on barrows, large stones. To eat they did not give us. We were beaten terribly" by German women guards: "They said that every day they must kill three, four Jews." She fell sick, and survived her time in the hospital only by hiding from the regular round-ups that carted off ill inmates to the crematoria. "Christian women were lying there, so I climbed over to the Christians, into their beds, and there I always had the good fortune to hide."

In October, the entire sick-ward was emptied. "There was a girl eighteen years old, and she was crying terribly. She said that she is still so young, she wants to live. . . . [But] nothing helped. They were all taken away." When she emerged from the ward, she saw the Auschwitz crematory burning in the night: "We saw the entire sky red [from] the glow of the fire. Blood was pouring on the sky." But Epstein again survived the selection for the Birkenau extermination center. She was sent back to Majdanek, where she witnessed SS and Gestapo killers forcing male inmates to dig mass graves, then lining up hundreds of female inmates to be shot. Over the course of a further eight months at Majdanek, she remained among the handful of inmates – several hundred only – spared gassing and cremation.

Epstein was eventually sent to a forced-labor center: Plaszow, near Krakow (the same camp featured in Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*). By late 1944, the Soviets were approaching Plaszow. "We were again dragged away. I was the second time taken to Auschwitz." After that, she was dispatched to Bergen-Belsen; then to Aschersleben in Germany proper, where she labored alongside Dutch, Yugoslav, and French prisoners-of-war.

American forces were now closing in from the West. Epstein was conscripted into a death march alongside 500 other inmates. “Only women. Two hundred fell en route.” At last, after a march of more than 250 kilometers, she reached Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia. This had long served as a “model” detention facility for the Nazis – the only one to which Red Cross representatives were admitted. “We were completely in tatters. . . . We were very dirty. . . . We were badly treated. We were beaten. They screamed at us. ‘Accursed swine! You are filthy. What sort of people are you?’” Epstein and her fellow inmates now looked like the “subhumans” the Germans had been indoctrinated to expect.

On the very last day of the European war, May 8, 1945, Theresienstadt was liberated by Russian forces. “We didn’t believe it. . . . We went out, whoever was able. . . . We went out with great joy, with much crying. . . .

“But now there began a real death. People who had been starved for so many years. . . . The Russians had opened all the German storehouses, all the German stores, and they said, ‘Take whatever you want.’ People who had been badly starved, they shouldn’t have eaten. . . . And the people began to eat, to eat too much, greedily. . . . Hundreds of people fell a day. . . . People crawled over the dead.” Typhus broke out. But Epstein survived. She returned to Warsaw, married, and emigrated to Palestine.

DEBATING THE HOLOCAUST

Many of the central themes of the Nazis’ attempted destruction of European Jews have served as touchstones for the broader field of comparative genocide studies. No other genocide has generated remotely as much literature as the Holocaust, including thousands of books and essays. It is important, therefore, to explore some major points of debate, not only for the insights they give into the events described in this chapter, but for their relevance to genocide studies as a whole.

Intentionalists vs. functionalists

The core of the debate over the past two decades has revolved around a scholarly tendency generally termed “intentionalist,” and a contrasting “functionalist” interpretation. Intentionalists, as the word suggests, place primary emphasis on the *intention* of the Nazis, from the outset, to eliminate European Jews by means that eventually included mass slaughter. Such an approach emphasizes the figure of Adolf Hitler and his monomaniacal zeal to eliminate the Jewish “cancer” from Germany and Europe. (“Once I really am in power,” Hitler allegedly told a journalist as early as 1922, “my first and foremost task will be the annihilation of the Jews.”)⁴¹ Necessary as well was the anti-semitic dimension of both Nazi ideology and European history.

This fueled the Nazis' animus against the Jews, and also ensured there would be no shortage of "willing executioners" to do the dirty work.

The functionalist critique, on the other hand, downplays the significance of Hitler as an individual. It "depicts the fragmentation of decision-making and the blurring of political responsibility," and emphasizes "the disintegration of traditional bureaucracy into a crooked maze of ill-conceived and uncoordinated task forces," in Colin Tatz's summary.⁴² Also stressed is the evolutionary and contingent character of the campaign against the Jews: from legal discrimination, to concentration, to mass murder. In this view, "what happened in Nazi Germany [was] an unplanned 'cumulative radicalization' produced by the chaotic decision-making process of a polycratic regime and the 'negative selection' of destructive elements from the Nazis' ideological arsenal as the only ones that could perpetually mobilize the disparate and otherwise incompatible elements of the Nazi coalition."⁴³

This sometimes acrimonious debate gave way, in the 1990s, to a recognition that the intentionalist and functionalist strands were not irreconcilable. "Both positions in the debate have a number of merits and demerits; both ultimately reflect different forms of historical explanation; and the ground between them is steadily narrowing in favour of a consensus which borrows elements from both lines of argument."⁴⁴ The raw material for Nazi genocide was present from the start, but required a host of historically contingent features to actualize and maximize it. Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman propose the term "intentional functionalism" to capture this interplay of actors and variables.⁴⁵

Jewish resistance

The depiction of Jews as having gone meekly to their deaths was first advanced by Raul Hilberg in his 1961 treatise *The Destruction of the European Jews*, and was then enshrined by Hannah Arendt in her controversial account of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Both Hilberg and Arendt noted the close pre-war coordination between the Jewish Agency (which sought to promote Jewish immigration to Palestine) and the Nazi authorities.⁴⁶ They also stressed the role of the Jewish councils (*Judenräte*), bodies of Jews delegated by the Nazis to oversee the ghettos and the round-ups of Jewish civilians. "The whole truth," as Arendt summarized it, was that without Jewish leadership and organization, the Jewish people would have suffered "chaos and plenty of misery" at Nazi hands, "but the total number of victims would hardly have been between four and a half and six million people."⁴⁷

While it may be true that "the salient characteristic of the Jewish community in Europe during 1933–1945 was its step-by-step adjustment to step-by-step destruction,"⁴⁸ research has undermined this depiction of Jewish passivity and complicity. Scholars have described how, under horrific circumstances, Jews found ways to resist: going into hiding; struggling to preserve Jewish culture and creativity; and even launching armed uprisings. (The Warsaw ghetto uprising which peaked in April–May 1943, and the mass escape from the Sobibor death camp in October 1943, are the most famous of these rebellions against the Nazis.)⁴⁹ Large numbers of Jews also joined the armed forces of the Allies, or fought as partisans behind German lines.

On balance, “it is pure myth that the Jews were merely ‘passive,’” wrote Alexander Donat in his memoir *The Holocaust Kingdom*:

The Jews fought back against their enemies to a degree no other community anywhere in the world would have been capable of were it to find itself similarly beleaguered. They fought against hunger and starvation, against disease, against a deadly Nazi economic blockade. They fought against murderers and against traitors within their own ranks, and they were utterly alone in their fight. They were forsaken by God and by man, surrounded by hatred or indifference. Ours was not a romantic war. Although there was much heroism, there was little beauty – much toil and suffering, but no glamour. We fought back on every front where the enemy attacked – the biological front, the economic front, the propaganda front, the cultural front – with every weapon we possessed.⁵⁰

Moreover, to the extent that Jews did *not* mount an effective resistance to their extermination, it is worth noting – as Daniel Goldhagen does – that “millions of Soviet POWs, young military men with organization, and leadership, and initial vigor, died passively in German camps [see Box 6a]. If these men, whose families were not with them, could not muster themselves against the Germans, how could the Jews be expected to have done *more*?”⁵¹

The Allies and the churches: Could the Jews have been saved?

The genocide against European Jews *could* have been avoided, argues the historian Yehuda Bauer, just as the Second World War itself might never have occurred – “had the Great Powers stopped Nazi Germany when it was still weak.” But at this point, “nobody knew that a Holocaust was even possible, because nobody knew what a Holocaust was; the Germans had not decided on anything like it in the 1930s.”⁵² The Allies, haunted by the carnage of the First World War, sought accommodation (“appeasement”) rather than confrontation.

The Evian Conference of July 1938, held in a French town on Lake Geneva, brought together representatives of Western countries to address the Jewish plight. In retrospect, and even at the time, it offered the best chance to alleviate the plight of German Jews, through the simple expedient of opening up Western borders to Jewish refugees. But instead, the West ducked its responsibility. In Germany, Hitler could barely conceal his delight. The rejection of the Jews not only further humiliated Jews themselves, but highlighted the hypocrisy of the West’s humanitarian rhetoric.

Turning to the period of full-scale genocide against the Jews, it seems clear that details of the killing operations were known to the Allies early on. For example, radio communications of the Nazi Order Police were intercepted, alluding to mass murder during the “Holocaust by Bullets.” But the Allies were observing from a distance, with Germany at the height of its power on the European continent. The sheer speed of the slaughter also militated against meaningful intervention. “From mid-March 1942 to mid-February 1943,” that is, in less than a year, “over one-half the victims of the Jewish Holocaust . . . lost their lives at the hands of Nazi killers.”⁵³

It may be argued that the inclusion of targets such as Auschwitz's gas chambers and crematoria in the Allied bombing campaign, along with key transport points for Jews, could have disrupted the Nazi killing machine. The case is especially cogent for the later stages of the war, as with the genocide of the Hungarian Jews in 1944–45 (when the USSR might also have been able to intervene). But on pre-war evidence, it is hard to believe that, if more effective military measures could have been found, the Allies would have placed saving Jews higher on the list of military priorities – or that doing so would have made much difference.

The role of the Christian churches has also been scrutinized and criticized. Pope Pius XII's placating of the Nazi regime in Germany, and his silence on the persecution of the Jews, are notorious.⁵⁴ While "the Holy See [Vatican] addressed numerous protests, demands, and inquiries *via diplomatic channels* both regarding the situation of Catholics in Poland and about the killing of the mentally ill . . . *Not one such diplomatic intervention dealt with the overall fate of the Jews.*" Regarding the fate of "non-Aryans in the territories under German authority," Pius wrote to a German bishop who had protested deportations of Jews: "Unhappily, in the present circumstances, We cannot offer them effective help other than through Our prayers."⁵⁵

Within Germany, the churches did virtually nothing to impede the genocide and indeed strove not to notice it, thereby facilitating it. The Nazis at numerous points demonstrated a keen sensitivity to public opinion, including religious opinion – protests from German churches were partly responsible for driving the "euthanasia" campaign underground after 1941. But such protests were not forthcoming from more than a handful of principled religious voices. When it came to defending parishioners whom the Nazis deemed of Jewish origin, "both Church and Church members drove away from their community, from their churches, people with whom they were united in worship, as one drives away mangy dogs from one's door."⁵⁶

The most successful examples of resistance to Hitler's genocidal designs for European Jewry came from a handful of Western and Northern European countries that were either neutral or under relatively less oppressive occupation regimes.⁵⁷ Here, sometimes, extension of the killing campaign could impose political costs that the Nazis were not willing to pay. The most vivid display of public opposition swept up virtually the entire adult population of Denmark, led by the royal family. When the Nazis decreed the imposition of the Jewish yellow star, non-Jewish Danes adopted it in droves as well, as a powerful gesture of solidarity. The regulation was rescinded. Subsequently, Danes arranged for the evacuation of the majority of the country's Jews to neutral Sweden, where they lived through the rest of the war (see Chapter 10). Sweden, meanwhile, saved "about half of Norwegian Jewry and almost all of the Danish Jews," and in 1944

involved herself more heavily in the heart of Europe, particularly in Budapest, where, along with Switzerland, Portugal, and the Vatican, the Swedish legation issued "protective passports," established safe houses, and generally attempted to restrain the German occupants and their Hungarian puppets from killing more Jews on Hungarian soil in the final hours of the war. Upon the liberation of Jews in concentration camps in the spring of 1945, Sweden accepted thousands of victims for medical treatment and rehabilitation.⁵⁸

Willing executioners?

Just as scholars have demonstrated increased interest in “micro-histories” of public opinion under the Nazis, and the role of ordinary German citizens in accepting and sustaining the regime, so have questions been raised about the role of different sectors of the German population in the genocide. After decades of research by Raul Hilberg and many others, it is a truism that not only German social and economic elites, but all the professions (up to and including the clergy, as we have seen), were corrupted or compromised by the Nazi state. In Michael Burleigh’s words, an “understanding of the process of persecution [on racial grounds] now includes greater awareness of the culpable involvement of various sections of the professional intelligentsia, such as anthropologists, doctors, economists, historians, lawyers and psychiatrists, in the formation and implementation of Nazi policies.”⁵⁹ For such figures, “the advent of the Nazi regime was coterminous with the onset of ‘boom’ conditions. No one asked or compelled these academics and scientists actively to work on the regime’s behalf. Most of them could have said no. In fact, the files of the regime’s many agencies bulge with their unsolicited recommendations.”⁶⁰

What of the genocidal participation of ordinary Germans? This subject has spawned the most vigorous debate in Holocaust studies over the past decade, though the illumination has not always matched the heat generated.

At the heart of the controversy was the publication, in 1992 and 1996 respectively, of Christopher Browning’s *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, and Daniel Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. Both scholars examined the same archives on Reserve Police Battalion 101, which consisted overwhelmingly of Germans drafted from civilian police units (often too old for regular military service). The records described in detail the battalion’s killings of helpless, naked Jewish civilians in occupied Poland during 1941–42, and the range of reactions among group members.

In interpreting the records, Browning acknowledged the importance of “the incessant proclamation of German superiority and incitement of contempt and hatred for the Jewish enemy.” But he also stressed other factors: “conformity to the group,” that is, peer pressure; the desire for praise, prestige, and advancement; and the threat of marginalization and anathematization in highly dangerous wartime circumstances. He referred to “the mutually intensifying effects of war and racism. . . . Nothing helped the Nazis to wage a race war so much as the war itself.”⁶¹

Goldhagen, dismissing Browning’s work, advanced instead an essentially mono-causal thesis. The Jewish Holocaust was the direct outgrowth of “eliminationist” anti-semitism, which by the twentieth century had become “common sense” for Germans. By 1941, “ordinary Germans easily became genocidal killers . . . [and] did so even though they did not have to.” They “kill[ed] Jews willingly and often eagerly,”⁶² though Goldhagen did recognize the importance of Nazi leaders in activating and channeling the anti-semitic impulse.

With the controversy now cooled, it is easier to appreciate the significance of “the Goldhagen debate.”⁶³ Goldhagen did counter a trend toward bloodless analysis and abstract theorizing in studies of the Jewish catastrophe. In addition, by achieving mass popularity, Goldhagen’s book, like Samantha Power’s *A Problem from Hell* (2002),



Figures 6.10 and 6.11 The exchange between Christopher Browning (left), author of *Ordinary Men* (1992), and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, author of *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (1996), centered on the motivations of “ordinary” German killers of Jews during the Holocaust. Was “eliminationist anti-semitism” the central factor, as Goldhagen argued? Or was it secondary to peer pressure and masculine bonding in wartime, as Browning suggested? The result was a defining – and continuing – debate in Holocaust and genocide studies.

Sources: *The Gazette*, University of North Carolina (Browning); JTN Productions (Goldhagen).

broke down the usual wall between scholarship and public debate. However, the core elements of Goldhagen’s thesis – that there was something unique about German anti-semitism that spawned the Holocaust; that Germans were only too ready to leap to bloodthirsty murder of Jews – have been decisively countered. Not only was anti-semitism historically stronger in countries other than Germany, but the virulence of its expression during the Second World War in (for example) Lithuania and Romania exceeded that of Germany. The Nazis, as noted above, were reluctant to confront “ordinary Germans” with bloody atrocity, though according to Saul Friedländer, “recent historical research increasingly turns German ignorance of the fate of the Jews into a mythical postwar construct.”⁶⁴ Nor could they rely on a widespread popular desire to inflict cruelty on Jews as the foundational strategy for implementing their genocide.

Israel, the Palestinians, and the Holocaust

Occasionally an experience of great suffering has been recognized as warranting creation or recognition of a homeland for the targeted group. Such was the case with East Timor (Box 7a), born from Indonesian occupation and genocide. The Kurdish protected zone and *de facto* state in northern Iraq may also qualify (Box 4a), together with the widespread recognition of Kosovo’s declaration of independence from Serbia

in 2008. But no case is as dramatic as that of Israel in the wake of the Second World War. The dream of the Zionist movement founded in the nineteenth century, to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine through mobilization and mass immigration, became a reality in the postwar period, as Britain abandoned its territorial mandate over Palestine, and Arabs and Jews fought over the territory. “Anti-Zionism in the Jewish community collapsed, and a consensus that Jewry, abandoned during the war, had to have a home of its own crystallized overnight.”⁶⁵ Jewish survivors of Nazi genocide provided Palestine with a critical mass of Jewish immigrants and, in the decades following the declaration of the Israeli state on May 15, 1948, Israel received tens of billions of dollars from the Federal Republic of Germany as reparations for the Holocaust of the Jews.

To a significant degree, successive Israeli governments have relied on the Holocaust as a touchstone of Jewish experience and national identity, and have used the threat of another genocide of the Jews to justify military and security policies.⁶⁶ Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for example, commemorated the country’s Holocaust Remembrance Day on April 21, 2009, by asserting that “only a matter of a few decades after the Holocaust, new forces have arisen that openly declare their intention to wipe the Jewish state off the face of the earth,” a reference to statements allegedly made in 2005 by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (see p. 521). Netanyahu added: “Holocaust deniers cannot commit another Holocaust against the Jewish people. This is the state of Israel’s supreme obligation.” Deputy Prime Minister Silvan Shalom claimed that “what Iran is trying to do right now” – a reference to the country’s nuclear program – “is not far away at all from what Hitler did to the Jewish people just 65 years ago.”⁶⁷

Palestinians and their supporters, for their part, have tended to adopt the genocide framework as well – but to attract attention to the Palestinian cause. They have sought to draw parallels between Israel’s repressive policies and those of the Nazis against Jews. Often such comparisons have seemed hysterical and/or counterproductive;⁶⁸ but sometimes they have resonated. Notable was Israeli general (later prime minister) Ariel Sharon’s dispatching of Christian Phalangist militia to the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, during the Israelis’ 1982 invasion of Lebanon. This led predictably to the *Einsatzgruppen*-style massacre of thousands of Palestinian civilians, as Israeli troops stood by. Renewed denunciations, employing the language of genocide and crimes against humanity, were issued after Israel imposed a ruinous blockade on the Gaza Strip, still in place at the time of writing (March 2010). The blockade was described as a “genocidal policy” by Israeli historian Ilan Pappé.⁶⁹ It prompted Richard Falk, subsequently the UN Human Rights Council’s monitor for Israel-Palestine, to write in 2007 that Israeli strategies toward Gaza were reminiscent of Nazi ghettoization policies toward Jews, displaying “a deliberate intention . . . to subject an entire human community to life-endangering conditions of utmost cruelty.”⁷⁰ In December 2008, Israel launched a massive assault on the Gaza Strip, killing many hundreds of Palestinian civilians and laying waste to large swathes of the territory. In the estimation of UN investigator Judge Richard Goldstone, this “deliberately disproportionate attack” was “designed to punish, humiliate and terrorize a civilian population, radically diminish its local economic capacity both to work and to provide for itself, and to force upon it an ever-increasing sense of dependency and vulnerability.”⁷¹

Is the Jewish Holocaust “uniquely unique”?

Few historical and philosophical issues have generated such intense scholarly debate in genocide studies as the question of Holocaust uniqueness. On one level, it is clearly facile. As Alex Alvarez put it: “All genocides are simultaneously unique and analogous.”⁷² The question is whether the Jewish Holocaust is *sui generis* – that is, “uniquely unique.”⁷³

In genocide studies, a well-known exponent of the uniqueness thesis is Steven Katz, who devoted his immense tome *The Holocaust in Historical Context, Vol. 1* to arguing that the Jewish Holocaust was “phenomenologically unique by virtue of the fact that never before has a state set out, as a matter of intentional principle and actualized policy, to annihilate physically every man, woman, and child belonging to a specific people.”⁷⁴ The Nazi campaign against the Jews was the only true genocide, as Katz defined the term (see p. 18; recall that my own preferred definition of genocide reworks Katz’s).

Other scholars have argued against the uniqueness hypothesis. Historian Mark Levene has pointed to an “obvious contradiction”: “while, on the one hand, the Holocaust has come to be commonly treated as the yardstick for all that might be described as ‘evil’ in our world, on the other, it is . . . a subject notably cordoned off and policed against those who might seek to make connections [with other genocides].”⁷⁵ Writer and poet Phillip Lopate has likewise argued that claims of uniqueness tend to bestow “a sort of privileged nation status in the moral honor roll.”⁷⁶ This claim of privilege then carries over to “the Jewish state,” Israel, helping to blunt criticism of its treatment of the Palestinians.⁷⁷

My own view should be clearly stated: the Jewish Holocaust was *not* “uniquely unique.” On no major analytical dimension – speed, scale, scope, intensity, efficiency, cruelty, ideology – does it stand alone and apart. If it is unique in its mix of these ingredients, so too are most of the other major instances of mass killing in their own way.⁷⁸ I also believe that uniqueness proponents, like the rest of us, were severely shaken by the holocaust in Rwanda in 1994 (see Chapter 9). The killing there proceeded much faster than the slaughter of the Jews; destroyed a higher proportion of the designated victim group (some 80 percent of Rwandan Tutsis versus two-thirds of European Jews); was carried out by “a chillingly effective organizational structure that would implement the political plan of genocide more efficiently than was achieved by the industrialized death camps in Nazi Germany”;⁷⁹ and – unlike the Jewish catastrophe – featured active participation by a substantial portion of the general population. Was Rwanda, then, “uniquely unique”? The claim seems as tenable as in the case of the Jewish Holocaust – but in both cases, a nuanced comparative framework is preferable.⁸⁰

The Jews *were* unique as a target of the Nazis. “In the end,” wrote Raul Hilberg, “. . . the Jews retained their special place.”⁸¹ According to Omer Bartov,

It was *only* in the case of the Jews that there was a determination to seek out every baby hidden in a haystack, every family living in a bunker in the forest, every woman trying to pass herself off as a Gentile. It was only in the case of the Jews that vast factories were constructed and managed with the sole purpose of killing

trainload after trainload of people. It was only in the case of the Jews that huge, open-air, public massacres of tens of thousands of people were conducted on a daily basis throughout Eastern Europe.⁸²

Lastly, the Jewish Holocaust holds a unique place in genocide studies. Among all the world's genocides, it alone produced a scholarly literature that spawned, in turn, a comparative discipline. Specialists on the subject played a central role in constituting the field and its institutions, such as the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) and the *Journal of Genocide Research*: "Genocide studies is really the outgrowth of the study of the Holocaust," as sociologist Thomas Cushman has noted; according to historian Dan Stone, "for good or ill," the Holocaust "has provided many of the theoretical frameworks and research strategies for analyzing other genocides."⁸³

Still, there is no denying that the Holocaust has been significantly de-centered from comparative genocide studies since the emergence of the post-Lemkin research agenda in the 1970s and 1980s. In introducing the third edition of his edited collection *Is the Holocaust Unique?* (2009), Alan S. Rosenbaum acknowledged that

since [my] initial conception of this project some fifteen years ago, the center of gravity for the once-intense debate about the overall arguable claim for the significant uniqueness of the Holocaust may gradually but perceptibly be shifting. . . . It is not that the Holocaust is considered by most responsible or fair-minded scholars as any less paradigmatic, but rather [that] as the Holocaust recedes into history and other genocidal events occur, its scope and dimensions may naturally be better understood in the context of a broader genocide studies investigation.⁸⁴

FURTHER STUDY

Note: No genocide has generated remotely as much scholarly attention as the Nazis' Holocaust against the Jews. The following is a bare sampling of core works in English; others are cited in subsequent chapters.

Irving Abella and Harold Troper, *None is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933–1948*. Toronto, ON: Key Porter Books, 2002. Canada's shameful treatment of Jewish would-be refugees from Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe; one facet of the West's abandonment of the Jews.

Götz Aly, *"Final Solution": Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews*. London: Arnold, 1999. Aly's "functionalist" argument stresses the role of Nazi bureaucrats confronted with problems of population management in the occupied territories. See also *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial War, and the Nazi Welfare State*.

Omer Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003. Essays by the principal scholar of the *Wehrmacht's* war on the eastern front; see also *Hitler's Army*.

Donald Bloxham, *The Final Solution: A Genocide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press,

2009. A nuanced and fluidly written comparative treatment, by one of genocide studies' most dynamic younger scholars.
- Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: Perennial, 1993. Based on some of the same archival sources as Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (see below), but emphasizes group dynamics in addition to anti-semitism. See also *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939–March 1942*.
- Avraham Burg, *The Holocaust is Over, We Must Rise from Its Ashes*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. Critical examination of the use and misuse of the Holocaust in contemporary Israeli society.
- Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. How Nazi racial ideology inspired genocidal policy.
- Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933–1945*. New York: Bantam, 1986 (reissue). Dawidowicz's 1975 work is now generally seen as too "intentionalist" in its interpretation of the Judeocide. But it is still in print and widely read.
- Alexander Donat, *The Holocaust Kingdom*. New York: Holocaust Library, 1978. Classic memoir of ghetto and death camp, sensitively told and translated.
- Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007. Friedländer's work won the Pulitzer Prize, and has been praised for integrating firsthand testimonies with the historical and archival record. See also *Nazi Germany and the Jews, Volume I: The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939*.
- Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008. Up-close, galvanizing account of daily life in Germany as the Nazi Holocaust was unleashed on Central and Eastern Europe.
- Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. Argues that ordinary Germans generally supported Nazi policies, often exhibiting enthusiasm beyond the call of duty.
- Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. New York: Vintage, 1997. Controversial book ascribing a monocausal explanation for the genocide, rooted in Germans' visceral hatred of the Jews.
- Jan T. Gross, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz*. New York: Random House, 2007. How murderous pogroms of Jews continued in Poland after the fall of the Third Reich. See also *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*.
- Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006. Eye-opening study of the Nazi conception of Jews as political threats ("Judeo-Bolsheviks") above all else.
- Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (3rd edn), 3 vols. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003. Massive, meticulous study of the bureaucracy of death.
- Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), trans. Ralph Mannheim. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1943. First published in 1925–26; lays out Hitler's vision of German destiny, as well as his virulent anti-semitism.

- Eric A. Johnson and Karl-Heinz Reuband, *What We Knew: Terror, Mass Murder, and Everyday Life in Nazi Germany: An Oral History*. New York: Basic Books, 2005. Rich study based on interviews with German-Jewish Holocaust survivors.
- Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (4th edn). London: Arnold, 2000. Overview of, and contribution to, scholarly debates about the nature of the Nazi regime.
- Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years*, 2 vols. New York: Modern Library, 1999, 2001. An essential document of the twentieth century: the testimony of a German Jewish professor who survived the entire Nazi era. See also *The Lesser Evil: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer, 1945–59*; and *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii: A Philologist’s Notebook*.
- Ronnie S. Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*. Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 1994. A good, accessible primer on the origins and course of the Jewish catastrophe.
- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*. New York: Touchstone, 1996. Haunting account of a year and a half in the Nazi death camp; see also *The Drowned and the Saved*.
- Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine*. Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. How Nazism exposed its imperial and genocidal nature most nakedly in the occupied territories of the East.
- David B. MacDonald, *Identity Politics in the Age of Genocide: The Holocaust and Historical Representation*. London: Routledge, 2008. How non-Jews have deployed the language and motifs of the Holocaust to highlight their own and others’ victimization.
- Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*. Boston, MA: Mariner, 2000. Myth-shattering investigation of the Holocaust’s evolving interpretations, and its emergence as a unifying force in American Jewish life.
- Alan S. Rosenbaum, ed., *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, 3rd edn. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009. Important and controversial essays, including some significant new ones for this edition.
- Ron Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of His Evil*. New York: Perennial, 1999. Quest for the essence of the malignancy that was Hitler.
- Shlomo Venezia, *Inside the Gas Chambers: Eight Months in the Sonderkommando of Auschwitz*. Cambridge: Polity, 2009. Astonishing testimony of a Greek Jew forced to serve in the gas chambers and crematoria of the Nazis’ most destructive death camp.

NOTES

- 1 In religious usage, a “holocaust” is “a sacrificial offering wholly consumed by fire in exaltation of God” (Arno J. Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken? The “Final Solution” in History* [New York: Pantheon, 1988], p. 16). However, in the twentieth century, this was supplanted by a secular usage, in which “holocaust” designates “a wide variety of conflagrations, massacres, wars, and disasters.” See Jon Petrie’s fascinating etymological study, “The Secular Word HOLOCAUST: Scholarly Myths, History, and 20th Century Meanings,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, 2: 1 (2000), pp. 31–64.
- 2 Donald L. Niewyk, “Holocaust: The Jews,” in Samuel L. Totten *et al.*, eds, *Century of Genocide: Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), p. 136. The figure of 5.1 to 5.4 million killed is used by the US Holocaust Museum; see

- Peter Balakian, *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), p. 195.
- 3 Statistics cited in Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman, *Denying History: Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why Do They Say It?* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), p. 174. Saul Friedländer also estimates “between five and six million Jews . . . killed” in the Holocaust: Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), p. 662.
 - 4 Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), p. xi.
 - 5 See Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer, eds, *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008).
 - 6 Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York: Vintage, 1997), pp. 37–38. For a detailed study of the progressive demonization of the Jews, see Steven T. Katz, “Medieval Antisemitism: The Process of Mythification,” ch. 6 in Katz, *The Holocaust in Historical Context, Vol. 1: The Holocaust and Mass Death before the Modern Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 225–316. However, as Mark Levene has pointed out to me, there was also a sense in which medieval Christianity *needed* the Jews – “for its own Christological endtime” and teleological myth. It may thus have been constrained from launching a full-scale genocidal assault on them. Levene, personal communication, August 26, 2005.
 - 7 Colin Tatz, *With Intent to Destroy: Reflecting on Genocide* (London: Verso, 2003), p. 44.
 - 8 Luther quoted in Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (3rd edn), Vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 13.
 - 9 The most infamous anti-semitic tract of modern times is the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (1903), a pamphlet that is now generally held to have been devised by the Tsar's secret police in pre-revolutionary Russia, but which purported to represent the ambitions and deliberations of a global Jewish conspiracy against Christian civilization. For the complete text of the *Protocols*, and a point-by-point refutation, see Steven Leonard Jacobs and Mark Weitzman, *Dismantling the Big Lie: the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 2003 – *n.b.* the centenary of the *Protocols*). For a consideration of its bizarrely enduring influence, see Evan Derkacz, “Again With the ‘Jewish Conspiracy,’” AlterNet.org, April 11, 2006. <http://www.alternet.org/story/34812>.
 - 10 Nor is the institution of the anti-semitic pogrom unknown even in post-World War Two Europe, as Jan T. Gross's sterling study, *Fear: Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz: An Essay in Historical Interpretation*, (New York: Random House, 2006) makes clear.
 - 11 In addition, for exponents of biological anti-semitism (a nineteenth-century invention), Jews came to be viewed as *innately* at odds with Western-Christian civilization. Religious conversion could no longer expunge their Jewishness – which helps explain why this option was denied to Jews under Nazi rule. My thanks to Benjamin Madley for this point.
 - 12 Ronnie S. Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 1994), p. 44.
 - 13 In the case of France, strong arguments have been made that anti-semitism was far more widespread and virulent, in elite and popular opinion, than was true in Germany. But “in France – unlike Germany – whatever the strength of antisemitic feeling on the streets, in the bars and in the universities, political power always remained in the hands of the liberal republicans, a government which never endorsed political antisemitism” (Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*, p. 63). However, when dictatorial government and “eliminationist anti-semitism” (Daniel Goldhagen's term) *were* imposed in France from 1940 to 1944 – under direct Nazi occupation and under the Vichy puppet regime – the authorities and a key section of the population cooperated enthusiastically in the transport for mass execution of the Jews.
 - 14 Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War against Homosexuals* (New York: Owl Books, 1988), p. 23.
 - 15 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), trans. Ralph Mannheim (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), p. 562.

- 16 Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*, pp. 317, 122.
- 17 See Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), and the discussion in Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, pp. 168–70.
- 18 Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, p. 141. A recent book treatment is Alan E. Steinweis, *Kristallnacht 1938* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009). For an excellent short analysis, see Leonidas E. Hill, "The Pogrom of November 9–10, 1938 in Germany," in Paul R. Brass, ed., *Riots and Pogroms* (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 89–113.
- 19 Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. vii.
- 20 Omer Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 197.
- 21 Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness 1933–1941* (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), pp. 165, 329–30, 393, 422, 429; Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness 1942–1945* (New York: The Modern Library, 2001), pp. 66, 71. Elisabeth Freund, a Jewish Berliner, also described the mixed but frequently sympathetic reaction that German Jews received from "Aryans" when forced to don the yellow star in September 1941: "I am greeted on the street with special politeness by complete strangers, and in the street car ostentatiously a seat is freed for me, although those wearing a star are allowed to sit only if no Aryan is still standing. But sometimes guttersnipes call out abusive words after me. And occasionally Jews are said to have been beaten up. Someone tells me of an experience in the city train. A mother saw that her little girl was sitting beside a Jew: 'Lieschen, sit down on the other bench, you don't need to sit beside a Jew.' At that an Aryan worker stood up, saying: 'And I don't need to sit next to Lieschen.'" Quoted in Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, p. 253.
- The important study by Eric A. Johnson and Karl-Heinz Reuband, *What We Knew: Terror, Mass Murder, and Everyday Life in Nazi Germany: An Oral History* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), further buttresses Klemperer's impression that anti-semitism was not widespread in Germany before 1933. Most German Jewish Holocaust survivors interviewed for the volume "stated that they and their families had felt well accepted and integrated in German society. Only a few believed that anti-Semitism was especially prevalent in Germany before the Nazi takeover in January 1933." However, and again meshing with Klemperer's documentation of a swiftly darkening situation, "the figures show that after Hitler took power in 1933, the once positive relations between Jews and non-Jews deteriorated. Whereas over two-thirds of the survivors' families before 1933 had friendly relations with non-Jews in their communities, after 1933 nearly two-thirds had relations that the survivors described as clearly worse or even hostile . . . Very few Jewish families in any German communities after 1933 maintained friendly associations with non-Jews . . . Even more disturbing, 22 percent of the survivors . . . suffered physical beatings from German civilians, and this was nearly three times the percentage of those who suffered beatings from Nazi policemen or other officials . . ." (pp. 269, 273, 279). While one-third of survivors "received significant help and support from non-Jewish German civilians during the Third Reich," it was also the case that "about two-thirds could not find a single German willing to help them, and one can only wonder about the Jews who did not survive" (p. 283).
- 22 Christopher R. Browning, *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. ix.
- 23 Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?*, pp. 114, 116–17.
- 24 Michael Burleigh, "Psychiatry, German Society and the Nazi 'Euthanasia' Programme," in Omer Bartov, ed., *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementation, Aftermath* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 70.
- 25 Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*, pp. 154–55. In his memoir of the Warsaw ghetto, Alexander Donat gives a figure for half a million ghetto internees as "27,000 apartments in an area of 750 acres, with six or seven persons to a room" (Donat, *The Holocaust Kingdom*

- [Washington, DC: Holocaust Library, 1999], p. 24). A famous portrait of life in the Warsaw ghetto in 1941, conveying the hardship and horror of ghetto life, is provided by the photographs taken by a German army officer, Heinrich Jost. See Gunther Schwarberg, *In the Ghetto of Warsaw: Photographs by Heinrich Jost* (Göttingen: Steidl Publishing, 2001).
- 26 See Richard Rhodes, *Masters of Death: The SS-Einsatzgruppen and the Invention of the Holocaust* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002).
 - 27 Mayrhofer quoted in Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine* (Durham, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp. 133–34.
 - 28 Omer Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust: Disputed Histories* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), p. 14. See also the excellent two-part essay by Wolfgang Weber, "The Debate in Germany over the Crimes of Hitler's *Wehrmacht*," World Socialist Web Site, September 19–20, 2001, <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/sep2001/wehr-s19.shtml> and <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/sep2001/wehr-s20.shtml>.
 - 29 A key "tipping point" for the Wehrmacht's "indiscriminate, systematic and wholesale resort to carnage" was the Commissar Order issued on June 6, 1941, which called for "Communist Party functionaries . . . to be identified . . . and murdered by the army either on the spot or in rear areas." "Effectively," notes Michael Burleigh, "the army was assuming the functions hitherto performed by the Einsatzgruppen, namely the killing of an entire group of people solely by virtue of their membership of that group and without formal process." Burleigh, *Ethics and Extermination: Reflections on Nazi Genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 67.
 - 30 Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), p. 107.
 - 31 Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 200.
 - 32 Kretschmer quoted in Shermer and Grobman, *Denying History*, p. 185.
 - 33 This gendered element of the slaughter is discussed further in Chapter 13.
 - 34 Jacques Sémelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), p. 276.
 - 35 The statistics are drawn from Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust*.
 - 36 Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, p. 215.
 - 37 "Whether the Germans were killing [Jews] immediately and directly in the gas chambers of an extermination camp or working and starving them to death in camps that they had not constructed for the express purpose of extermination (namely in concentration or 'work' camps), the mortality rates of Jews in camps was at exterminatory, genocidal levels and typically far exceeded the mortality rates of other groups living side by side with them. . . . The monthly death rate for Jews in Mauthausen [camp] was, from the end of 1942 to 1943, 100 percent. Mauthausen was not formally an extermination camp and, indeed, it was not for non-Jews, who at the end of 1943 all had a mortality rate below 2 percent." Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, p. 173. For more on the Nazi system of forced and slave labour, see Wolf Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor Under the Nazis: Economic Needs and Racial Aims, 1938–1944*, trans. Kathleen M. Dell'Orto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
 - 38 On the forced marches of Jews and other camp inmates, see "Marching to What End?," ch. 14 in Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, pp. 355–71.
 - 39 Niewyk, "Holocaust: The Jews," p. 150.
 - 40 Ibid.; for Epstein's testimony, see pp. 150–70.
 - 41 Hitler quoted in Gerald Fleming, *Hitler and the Final Solution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), p. 17.
 - 42 Tatz, *With Intent to Destroy*, p. 22.
 - 43 Browning, *The Path to Genocide*, p. 86.
 - 44 Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 96. Dan Stone likewise contends that "there are now very few historians who would take either an extreme intentionalist or an

- extreme functionalist position, since most now recognize both that before 1941 or 1942 there was no clearly formulated blueprint for genocide and that a worldview built on mystical race thinking, especially anti-Semitism, lay at the heart of the regime.” Stone, “The Holocaust and its Historiography,” in Dan Stone, ed., *The Historiography of Genocide* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 377.
- 45 Shermer and Grobman, *Denying History*, p. 213.
- 46 Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Vol. 1, pp. 139–40; Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, pp. 59–60.
- 47 Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, pp. 117–18, 125. See also the discussion in Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Vol. 1, pp. 218–22. “With the growth of the destructive function of the Judenräte, many Jewish leaders felt an almost irresistible urge to look like their German masters” (p. 219).
- 48 Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945* (New York: Perennial, 1993), p. 170. In *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Vol. 2, p. 901), Hilberg referred to “masses of Jewish deportees, numb, fantasy-ridden, and filled with illusions, [who] reacted with mechanical cooperation to every German command” (the specific reference is to the Hungarian deportations of 1944).
- 49 See Richard Rashke, *Escape from Sobibor* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995); Israel Gutman, *Resistance: The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998). Also notable was the doomed rebellion of the *Sonderkommando* (Jews selected to do the dirty work in the gas chambers and crematoria) at Auschwitz II-Birkenau in October 1944, and the Polish Jewish partisan movement led by the three Bielski brothers, depicted in the 2008 film *Defiance* (based on Nechama Tec, *Defiance: The True Story of the Bielski Partisans* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994]).
- 50 Donat, *The Holocaust Kingdom*, p. 7.
- 51 Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Worse Than War: Genocide, Eliminationism, and the Ongoing Assault on Humanity* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), p. 133.
- 52 Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, p. 213.
- 53 Browning, *The Path to Genocide*, p. ix.
- 54 See John Cornwell, *Hitler’s Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (New York: Penguin, 2008); Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *A Moral Reckoning: The Role of the Catholic Church in the Holocaust and Its Unfulfilled Duty of Repair* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002).
- 55 Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, pp. 568, 572.
- 56 Reginald H. Phelps, quoted in Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, p. 443.
- 57 In the case of Denmark, Saul Friedländer wrote: “The Germans had allowed a semi-autonomous Danish government to stay in place, and their own presence as occupiers was hardly felt. Hitler had decided on this peculiar course to avoid unnecessary difficulties in a country [that was] strategically important . . . ‘racially related’ to the community of Nordic peoples, and mainly an essential supplier of agricultural products . . .” Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, p. 545.
- 58 Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, p. 258.
- 59 Burleigh, *Ethics and Extermination*, pp. 155, 164.
- 60 Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, p. 51.
- 61 Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1998), pp. 184, 186.
- 62 Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, pp. 277, 446.
- 63 See Robert R. Shandley, ed., *Unwilling Germans? The Goldhagen Debate* (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
- 64 Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, p. 511. See Chapter 14 for further discussion of history and memory in Germany after the Second World War.
- 65 Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, p. 191. As Martha Minow comments, “The creation of Israel could be viewed as a kind of international reparation effort.” Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1998), p. 133.

- 66 See Idith Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- 67 "Israel Pledges to Protect Itself from 'New Holocaust' Threat Posed by Iran's Nuclear Programme," *Daily Telegraph*, April 21, 2009. Ahmadinejad's comments, made to a "World Without Zionism" conference in Tehran on October 26, 2005, were translated in many media as "Israel must be wiped off the map," suggesting the country and its population should be physically destroyed. However, this is disputed by, among others, Juan Cole, who claims a more accurate translation is: "This regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time." In this reading, asserts Cole, "Ahmadinejad was not making a threat, he was quoting a saying of [Ayatollah] Khomeini and urging that pro-Palestinian activists in Iran not give up hope – that the occupation of Jerusalem was no more a continued inevitability than had been the hegemony of the Shah's government," overthrown in Iran in 1979. See Cole, "Informed Comment," May 3, 2006, <http://www.juancole.com/2006/05/hitchens-hacker-and-hitchens.html>.
- 68 See, e.g., "[Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud] Abbas: IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Action Worse than Holocaust," *The Jerusalem Post*, March 2, 2008; "Iran: Israeli Crimes Outstrip Holocaust," Reuters dispatch on Aljazeera.net, February 12, 2006.
- 69 Ilan Pappé, "Genocide in Gaza," *The Electronic Intifada*, September 2, 2006, <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article5656.shtml>.
- 70 Richard Falk, "Slouching toward a Palestinian Holocaust," The Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, June 29, 2007, http://www.transnational.org/Area_MiddleEast/2007/Falk_PalestineGenocide.html. A Red Cross report leaked in 2008 described a "progressive deterioration in food security for up to 70 per cent of Gaza's population" as a result of the Israeli siege, adding that "Chronic malnutrition is on a steadily rising trend and micronutrient deficiencies are of great concern." Quoted in Donald Macintyre, "Chronic Malnutrition in Gaza Blamed on Israel," *The Independent*, November 15, 2008. Former US president Jimmy Carter stated in 2008 that the Palestinian population of Gaza was being "starved to death," with caloric intakes lower than in the poorest African countries: "It's an atrocity what is being perpetrated as punishment on the people in Gaza. . . . I think it is an abomination that this continues to go on." Jonathan Wright, "Carter Calls Gaza Blockade a Crime and Atrocity," Reuters dispatch on Yahoo! News, April 18, 2008.
- 71 Goldstone report cited in Rory McCarthy, "UN Investigation Finds Evidence of War Crimes in Gaza Campaign," *The Guardian*, October 25, 2009.
- 72 Alex Alvarez, *Governments, Citizens, and Genocide: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approach* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), p. 14.
- 73 The phrase "uniquely unique" was first used by Alice L. Eckhardt and Roy Eckhardt; see Gunnar Heinsohn, "What Makes the Holocaust a Uniquely Unique Genocide?," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 2: 3 (2000), p. 430 (n. 95).
- 74 Katz, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, p. 28.
- 75 Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation-State, Vol. 1: The Meaning of Genocide* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), p. 2.
- 76 Lopate, cited in Helen Fein, *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective* (London: Sage Publications, 1993), p. 52.
- 77 A recent polemic charges that a "Holocaust industry" has been created to win financial concessions from banks, industrial enterprises, and others who profited from the Jewish catastrophe. See Norman G. Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (new edn) (New York: Verso, 2003).
- 78 As David Moshman put it: "True, the Holocaust is phenomenologically distinct from every other genocide, but so is every other genocide distinct from every other. Every genocide is unique, and the Holocaust is no exception." Moshman, "Conceptions of Genocide and Perceptions of History," in Stone, ed., *The Historiography of Genocide*, p. 72.
- 79 Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 212.

- 80 Interestingly, Vol. 2 of Steven Katz's *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, which was supposed to apply his uniqueness thesis to twentieth-century cases of mass killing, was scheduled for publication some years ago, but has yet to appear. I have often wondered whether Katz hit an insuperable roadblock in applying his uniqueness thesis to the Rwandan genocide, which occurred the same year his first volume was published.
- 81 Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Vol. 3, p. 1075.
- 82 Bartov, *Germany's War and the Holocaust*, p. 106.
- 83 Thomas Cushman, "Is Genocide Preventable? Some Theoretical Considerations," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 5: 4 (2003), p. 528; Dan Stone, "Introduction," in Stone, ed., *The Historiography of Genocide*, p. 2. Interestingly, the fate of the Jews was not primary in Raphael Lemkin's framing of genocide in his 1944 book, which first propounded the concept. Martin Shaw has written: "For Lemkin (although himself Jewish and absolutely concerned about the horrors inflicted on the Jews), Nazi genocide was never exclusively or primarily an anti-Jewish campaign; that was not the standard against which other Nazi persecutions were measured. On the contrary, his book aimed to demonstrate (by placing on record translations of Nazi laws in the occupied countries) how comprehensively, against a range of subject peoples, the Nazis had attempted to destroy the existence of nations, their well-being, institutions and ways of life." Shaw, *What is Genocide?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), pp. 20–21.
- 84 Alan S. Rosenbaum, "Introduction to the Third Edition," in Rosenbaum, ed., *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009), p. 21. Martin Shaw goes further: "In order to understand other genocides . . . the imperative is not to compare them with the Holocaust – which as a specific episode was necessarily unique in many respects – but to interpret them in terms of a coherent general conception. We don't need a standard that steers all discussion towards a maximal concept of industrial extermination, a standard that distorts even the Nazi genocide against the Jews. We do need a coherent, generic, sociological concept of genocide that can make sense of a range of historical experiences." Shaw, *What is Genocide?*, p. 45.

BOX 6A THE NAZIS' OTHER VICTIMS

While most people associate Nazi genocide with the Jewish Holocaust, a plethora of other victim groups accounted for the majority of those killed by the Nazis. Only in 1942 did the mass murder of Jews come to predominate, as historian Christopher Browning pointed out:

If the Nazi regime had suddenly ceased to exist in the first half of 1941, its most notorious achievements in human destruction would have been the so-called euthanasia killing of seventy to eighty thousand German mentally ill and the systematic murder of the Polish intelligentsia. If the regime had disappeared in the spring of 1942, its historical infamy would have rested on the "war of destruction" against the Soviet Union. The mass death of some two million prisoners of war in the first nine months of that conflict would have stood out even more prominently than the killing of approximately one-half million Jews in that same period.

"Ever since," wrote Browning, the Jewish Holocaust "has overshadowed National Socialism's other all-too-numerous atrocities."¹ It does so in this book

as well. Yet it is important to devote attention, however inadequate, to the Nazis' other victims.

PRE-WAR PERSECUTIONS AND THE "EUTHANASIA" CAMPAIGN

Communists and socialists

The first Nazi concentration camp was located at Dachau, near Munich. Opened in March 1933 – two months after the Nazis seized power – its stated purpose was “to concentrate, in one place, not only all Communist officials but also, if necessary, the officials of . . . other Marxist formations who threaten the security of the state.”² Bolshevism was as central to Hitler’s *Weltanschauung* (worldview) as anti-semitism, embodying the decadent modernist tendencies that he loathed. In fact, Hitler’s ideology and geopolitical strategy are best seen as motivated by a hatred of “Judeo-Bolshevism,” and a conviction that the Nazis’ territorial ambitions in Central and Eastern Europe could be realized only through victory over “the Marxist-cum-Bolshevik ‘octopus’ and the Jewish world conspiracy.”³

One can distinguish between pre-war and wartime phases of the campaign against communists and socialists. In the pre-war stage, these sectors dominated the security policies of the Reich. They were the major targets of state violence and incarceration in camps; Jews-as-Jews were not targeted for substantial physical violence or imprisonment until *Kristallnacht* in 1938, by which time the German Left had been crushed. Communists, socialists, and other Left-oppositionists were also purged from public institutions in a manner very similar to Jews.⁴ Historian Arnold Sywottek estimates that the Gestapo murdered in excess of 100,000 communists during the twelve years of the Third Reich.⁵

After the occupation of western Poland in September–October 1939, and especially with the invasion of eastern Poland and the Soviet Union in June 1941, the struggle against Bolshevism became bound up with the Nazis’ ambition to enslave and exterminate the Slavic “subhuman.” “What the Bolsheviks are must be clear to anybody who ever set sight upon the face of a Red Commissar,” declared an article in the Nazi military paper, *Mitteilungen für die Truppe* (Information for the Troops), as the invasion of the Soviet Union was launched in June 1941. “Here no theoretical explanations are necessary anymore. To call beastly the traits of these people, a high percentage of whom are Jews, would be an insult to animals. . . . In these Commissars we see the uprising of subhumans against noble blood.”⁶ As this quotation suggests, the Nazis’ ideological struggle against communists and socialists became intertwined with the national and military struggle with the USSR; the threat of ethnic swamping by “barbarians from the East”; and the assault on European Jewry.

Asocials and undesirables

The Nazis' quest for racial purity and social homogeneity meant that "asocial" elements were to be annihilated or, in some cases, reformed. An effective study of this phenomenon is Robert Gellately's book on Nazism and German public opinion, *Backing Hitler*. Considered asocial was "anyone who did not participate as a good citizen and accept their social responsibilities." Among the groups harassed and punished were men seen as "shirking" paid work, or otherwise congenitally prone to unemployment or vagabondage.⁷ Gellately describes a "special action" organized by Nazi police chief Heinrich Himmler in March 1937 "to arrest 2,000 people out of work":

The instruction was to send to concentration camps, those who "*in the opinion of the Criminal Police*" were professional criminals, repeat offenders, or habitual sex offenders. The enthusiasm of the police was such that they arrested not 2,000, but 2,752 people, only 171 of whom had broken their probation. Police used the event as a pretext to get rid of "problem cases." Those arrested were described as break-in specialists (938), thieves (741), sex offenders (495), swindlers (436), robbers (56), and dealers in stolen goods (86). Only 85 of them [3 percent] were women.⁸

According to Gellately, "A recurrent theme in Hitler's thinking was that in the event of war, the home front would not fall prey to saboteurs, that is, anyone vaguely considered to be 'criminals,' 'pimps,' or 'deserters.'" The result was that "asocial" men, along with some women accused of involvement in the sex trade or common crimes, were confined in "camps [that] were presented as educative institutions . . . places for 'race defilers, rapists, sexual degenerates and habitual criminals'" (quoting an article in *Das Schwarze Korps* newspaper). Although "these camps were nothing like the death camps in the eastern occupied territories, the suffering, death, and outright murder in them was staggering."⁹

Just as Jews and bolshevism blurred in the Nazis' ideology, it is important to recognize the overlap among asocials, Jews, and Roma (Gypsies). It was a cornerstone of the Nazi demonization of Jews that they were essentially a parasitic class, incapable of "honest" work and thus driven to usury, lazy cosmopolitanism, and criminality. Likewise, perhaps the *core* of the Nazi racial hatred of Roma lay in their stereotypical depiction as shiftless and inclined to criminal behavior. The genocidal consequences of these stereotypes are examined in the "Other Holocausts" section, below.

Homosexual men

For all the promiscuous hatreds of Adolf Hitler, "homophobia was not one of his major obsessions,"¹⁰ and Hitler does not seem to have been the moving force

behind the Nazi campaign against gay men. (Lesbian women were never systematically targeted or arrested.)¹¹ Rather, that dubious honor goes to the owlish Heinrich Himmler, supreme commander of the SS paramilitary force, “whose loathing of homosexuals knew no bounds.”¹² As early as 1937, in a speech to the SS academy at Bad Toelz, Himmler pledged: “Like stinging nettles we will rip them [homosexuals] out, throw them on a heap, and burn them. Otherwise . . . we’ll see the end of Germany, the end of the Germanic world.” Later he would proclaim to his Finnish physiotherapist, Dr. Felix Kersten:

We must exterminate these people root and branch. Just think how many children will never be born because of this, and how a people can be broken in nerve and spirit when such a plague gets hold of it. . . . The homosexual is a traitor to his own people and must be rooted out.¹³

As these comments suggest, the reviling of gays was linked to Nazi beliefs surrounding asocial and “useless” groups, who not only contributed nothing productive to the body politic, but actively subverted it. Gay males – because they chose to have sex with men – “were self-evidently failing in their duty to contribute to the demographic expansion of the ‘Aryan-Germanic race,’ at a time when millions of young men had perished in the First World War.”¹⁴ Just as Roma and (especially) Jews were deemed parasites on German society and the national economy, so were gays labeled “as useless as hens which don’t lay eggs” and “sociosexual propagation misfits.”¹⁵ (They did, however, have their uses: among some conquered peoples, homosexuality was to be encouraged, since it “would hasten their degeneracy, and thus their demise.”)¹⁶

Richard Plant’s study of the Nazi persecution of gays, *The Pink Triangle*, estimated the number of men convicted for homosexual “crimes” from 1933 to 1944 to be “between 50,000 and 63,000, of which nearly 4,000 were juveniles.”¹⁷ In the concentration camps that were the destiny of thousands of them, their “fate . . . can only be described as ghastly.”¹⁸ Like the Jews, they were forced to wear a special badge (the pink triangle of Plant’s title), were referred to contemptuously as *Mannweiber* (“manwives”), and were segregated from their fellow prisoners, who often joined in the derision and brutalization. An inmate at Dachau reported that “the prisoners with the pink triangle did not live very long; they were quickly and systematically exterminated by the SS.”¹⁹ According to Konnilyn Feig, they found themselves “tormented from all sides as they struggle[d] to avoid being assaulted, raped, worked, and beaten to death.”²⁰ Gay men were also among the likeliest candidates for medical experiments. At no point was support and solace likely from relatives or friends, because of the shame and stigma attaching to their “crimes.” Plant estimates that the large majority of homosexuals consigned to concentration camps perished there – some 5,000 to 15,000 men.²¹

Jehovah's Witnesses and religious dissidents

If gays were dragged into the Nazi holocaust by their “traitorous” reluctance to contribute to Germany’s demographic revival, Jehovah’s Witnesses – already anathematized as a religious cult by the dominant Protestant and Catholic religious communities – were condemned for refusing to swear loyalty to the Nazi regime and to serve in the German military. In April 1935 the faith was formally outlawed, and later that year the first 400 Jehovah’s Witnesses were consigned to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. By 1939 the number incarcerated there and in other prisons and camps had ballooned to 6,000.

When war broke out in September 1939, the Witnesses’ rejection of military service aroused still greater malevolence. Only a few days after the German invasion of Poland, a believer who refused to swear loyalty to the regime, August Dickmann, was executed by the Gestapo “in order to set an example.”²² In all, “Over the course of the dictatorship, as many as 10,000 members of the community were arrested, with 2,000 sent to concentration camps, where they were treated dreadfully and as many as 1,200 died or were murdered.”²³

In a curious twist, however, a positive stereotype also arose around the Witnesses. They came to be viewed in the camps as “industrious, neat, and tidy, and uncompromising in [their] religious principles.” Accordingly,

the SS ultimately switched to a policy of trying to exploit [the Witnesses’] devotion to duty and their reliability. . . . They were used as general servants in SS households or put to work in small Kommandos [work teams] when there was a threat that prisoners might escape. In Ravensbrück [women’s concentration camp], they were showcased as “exemplary prisoners,” while in Niederhagen, the only camp where they constituted the core population, they were put to work on renovations.²⁴

As for mainstream religion, in general the Nazis distrusted it, preferring their own brand of mysticism and *Volk*-worship. Their desire not to provoke unrest among the general population, or (before the war) international opposition, limited their campaign against the main Protestant dominations and the large Catholic minority in Germany. No such restraint obtained in occupied Poland, however, where leading Catholic figures were swept up in the campaign of eliticide against the Polish intelligentsia. At home, as the war turned against Germany, religious dissidents of all stripes came to be hounded, imprisoned, and killed. The best-known case is that of the Protestant pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who declaimed against the Nazi regime from his pulpit, and was hanged in Flossenburg concentration camp shortly before the war ended. His *Letters and Papers from Prison* has become a classic of devotional literature.²⁵

The handicapped and infirm

As with every other group the Nazis targeted, the campaign against the handicapped and infirm exploited a popular receptiveness based on long-standing patterns of discrimination and anathematization in European and Western culture. An offshoot of the Western drive for modernity was the development of a science of eugenics, taking both positive and negative forms: "Positive eugenics was the attempt to encourage increased breeding by those who were considered particularly fit; negative eugenics aimed at eliminating the unfit."²⁶ The foci of this international movement were Germany, Great Britain, and the United States (the US pioneered the use of forced sterilization against those considered "abnormal").²⁷ In Germany in the 1920s, treatises by noted legal and medical authorities railed against those "unworthy of life" and demanded the "destruction" of disabled persons in institutions. This was not murder but "mercy death."²⁸ Such views initially received strong public backing, even among many relatives of institutionalized patients.²⁹

Once in power, the Nazis intensified the trend. Within a few months, they had promulgated the Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Progeny, beginning a policy that by 1945 had led to the forced sterilization of some 300,000 people. The Marriage Health Law followed in 1935, under which Germans seeking to wed were forced to provide medical documentation proving that they did not carry hereditary conditions or afflictions. If they could not so demonstrate, the application was rejected.³⁰

In the two years prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, Hitler and other Nazi planners began paving the way for the collective killing of disabled infants and children, then of adults. Hitler used the "fog of war" to cover the implementation of the campaign (the authorization, personally signed by Hitler on September 8, 1939, was symbolically backdated to September 1 to coincide with the invasion of Poland). "An elaborate covert bureaucracy"³¹ was established in a confiscated Jewish property at Tiergartenstrasse 4 in Berlin, and "Aktion T-4" – as the extermination program was dubbed – moved into high gear. The program's "task was to organise the registration, selection, transfer and murder of a previously calculated target group of 70,000 people, including chronic schizophrenics, epileptics and long-stay patients."³² All were deemed *unnutze Esser*, "useless eaters" – surely one of the most macabre phrases in the Nazi vocabulary. In the end, the plan was overfulfilled. Among the victims were an estimated 6,000 to 7,000 children, who were starved to death or administered fatal medication. Many adults were dispatched to a prototype gas chamber.³³

At every point in the chain of death, the complicity of nurses, doctors, and professionals of all stripes was enthusiastic. Yet as the scope of the killing widened, the general population (and Germany's churches) proved more ambivalent, eventually leading to open protest. In August 1941, "Aktion T-4" was closed down in Germany. But a decentralized version continued in operation until the last days of the war, and even beyond (the last victim died

on May 29, 1945, under the noses of Allied occupiers). Meanwhile, the heart of the program – its eager supervisors and technicians – was bundled east, to manage the extermination of Jews and others in the death camps of Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor in Poland. Thus, “the euthanasia program was the direct precursor of the death factories – ideologically, organizationally, and in terms of personnel.”³⁴

Predictably, then, mass murder in the eastern occupied territories also targeted the handicapped. “In Poland the Germans killed almost all disabled Poles . . . The same applied in the occupied Soviet Union.”³⁵ With the assistance of the same *Einsatzgruppen* death squads who murdered hundreds of thousands of Jews in the first year of the war, some 100,000 people deemed “unworthy of life” were murdered at a single institution, the Kiev Pathological Institute in Ukraine.³⁶ In all, perhaps a quarter of a million handicapped and disabled individuals died to further the Nazis’ fanatical social-engineering scheme.



Figure 6A.1 A farmer took this clandestine photo of smoke billowing from the crematorium chimney of the Schloss Hartheim killing complex in Germany, as Aktion (Operation) T-4 – the mass murder of the handicapped – was underway in 1940–41. Hartheim was one of six main facilities for the Nazi “euthanasia” campaign, which served as a trial run for the Holocaust, including the use of gas chambers to kill victims.

Source: Wolfgang Schuhmann/United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

OTHER HOLOCAUSTS

The Slavs

The ethnic designation “Slav” derives from the same root as “slave,” and that is the destiny to which Nazi policies sought to consign Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, White Russians (Belorussians), and other Slavic peoples. “The Slavs are a mass of born slaves, who feel the need of a master,” Hitler declared, making clear his basically colonialist fantasies for the east: “We’ll supply the Ukrainians with scarves, glass beads and everything that colonial peoples like.”³⁷

But if they were primitive and contemptible, the Slavic “hordes” were also dangerous and expansionist – at least when dominated and directed by Jews (i.e., “Judeo-bolsheviks”). It may be argued that the confrontation with the Slavs was inseparable from, and as central as, the campaign against the Jews. Consider the words of Colonel-General Hoepner, commander of Panzer Group 4 in the invasion of the Soviet Union, on sending his troops into battle:

The war against the Soviet Union is an essential component of the German people’s struggle for existence. It is the old struggle of the Germans against the Slavs, the defense of European culture against the Muscovite-Asiatic flood, the warding off of Jewish Bolshevism. This struggle must have as its aim the demolition of present Russia and must therefore be conducted with unprecedented severity. Both the planning and the execution of every battle must be dictated by an iron will to bring about a merciless, total annihilation of the enemy.³⁸

The first victims of the anti-Slav genocide were, however, Polish. Hitler’s famous comment, “Who, after all, talks nowadays of the annihilation of the Armenians?” (see Chapter 4), is often mistaken as referring to the impending fate of Jews in Nazi-occupied territories. In fact, Hitler was speaking just before the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, referring to commands he had issued to “kill without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of Polish descent or language. Only in this way can we obtain the living space we need.”³⁹ Richard Lukas is left in little doubt of Nazi plans:

While the Germans intended to eliminate the Jews before the end of the war, most Poles would work as helots until they too shared the fate of the Jews. . . . The conclusion is inescapable that had the war continued, the Poles would have been ultimately obliterated either by outright slaughter in gas chambers, as most Jews had perished, or by a continuation of the policies the Nazis had inaugurated in occupied Poland during the war – genocide by execution, forced labor, starvation, reduction of biological propagation, and Germanization.

Others dispute the claim that non-Jewish Poles were destined for annihilation. Nonetheless, as Lukas notes, “during almost six years of war, Poland lost 6,028,000 of its citizens, or 22 percent of its total population, the highest ratio of losses to population of any country in Europe.” Nearly three million of the murdered Poles were Jews, but “over 50 percent . . . were Polish Christians, victims of prison, death camps, raids, executions, epidemics, starvation, excessive work, and ill treatment.”⁴⁰ Six million Poles were also dispatched to toil in Germany as slave-laborers. The Soviets’ depredations during their relatively brief occupation of eastern Poland (September 1939 to June 1941), and again after 1944, also contributed significantly to the death-toll (see Chapter 5).

As for the Slavs of Ukraine, Russia, and other parts of the Soviet Union, their suffering is legendary. A commonly cited estimate is that *about twenty-seven million* Soviet citizens died. The disproportionate number of militarized male victims would have “catastrophic . . . demographic consequences” for decades after, with women of the relevant age groups outnumbering men by two or even three to one.⁴¹ But two-thirds of the victims – *about eighteen million people* – were civilians.⁴² Exploitation of Slavs as slave laborers was merciless and genocidal. According to historian Catherine Merridale, “At least three million [Soviet] men and women (one famous Russian source gives a figure of over five million) were shipped off to the Reich to work as slaves. Many of these – probably more than two million – were worked so hard that they joined Europe’s Jews in the death camps, discarded by the Reich for disposal like worn-out nags sent to the abattoir.”⁴³

Titanic Soviet sacrifices, and crushing military force, proved key to Nazi Germany’s defeat, with the other Allies playing important supporting roles. Between the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941 and the D-Day invasion of France in June 1944, some 80 percent of German forces were deployed in the East, and the overwhelming majority of German military casualties occurred there. As Yugoslav partisan leader Arso Jovanovic put it at the time: “Over there on the Eastern front – that’s the real war, where whole divisions burn up like matchsticks” – and millions of civilians along with them.⁴⁴

Soviet prisoners-of-war

“Next to the Jews in Europe,” wrote Alexander Werth, “the biggest single German crime was undoubtedly the extermination by hunger, exposure and in other ways of . . . Russian war prisoners.”⁴⁵ Yet the murder of at least 3.3 million Soviet POWs is one of the least-known of modern genocides; there is still no full-length book on the subject in English. It also stands as one of the most intensive genocides of all time: “a holocaust that devoured millions,” as Catherine Merridale acknowledges.⁴⁶ The large majority of POWs, some 2.8 million, were killed in just eight months of 1941–42, a rate of slaughter matched (to my knowledge) only by the 1994 Rwanda genocide.⁴⁷

The Soviet men were captured in massive encirclement operations in the early months of the German invasion, and in gender-selective round-ups that occurred in the newly occupied territories. All men between the ages of 15 and 65 were deemed to be prisoners-of-war, and liable to be “sent to the rear.” Given that the Germans, though predicting victory by such epic encirclements, had deliberately avoided making provisions for sheltering and feeding millions of prisoners, “sent to the rear” became a euphemism for mass murder.

“Testimony is eloquent and prolific on the abandonment of entire divisions under the open sky,” wrote Alexander Dallin:

Epidemics . . . decimated the camps. Beatings and abuse by the guards were commonplace. Millions spent weeks without food or shelter. Carloads of prisoners were dead when they arrived at their destination. Casualty figures varied considerably but almost nowhere amounted to less than 30 percent in the winter of 1941–42, and sometimes went as high as 95 percent.⁴⁸

A Hungarian tank officer who visited one POW enclosure described “tens of thousands of Russian prisoners. Many were on the point of expiring. Few could stand on their feet. Their faces were dried up and their eyes sunk deep into their sockets. Hundreds were dying every day, and those who had any strength left dumped them in a vast pit.”⁴⁹ German guards took their amusement by “throwing a dead dog into the prisoners’ compound,” citing an eyewitness



Figure 6A.2 Soviet prisoners-of-war await their fate in Nazi captivity, summer or autumn 1941.

Source: Hulton-Deutsch Collection/Corbis.



Figure 6A.3 Mass grave of Soviet prisoners, 1941–42. “The photos . . . were found by chance during a search action. They are from the widow of a member of *Landeschützenbataillon* 432, which guarded the Dulag [= *Durchgangslager*, transit camp for POWs] 121 in Gomel . . . The photo in all probability shows a scene from the huge mass dying of the prisoners of war” (holocaustcontroversies.blogspot.com).

Source: Klaus-Michael Mallmann *et al.*, eds, *Deutscher Osten 1939–1945: Der Weltanschauungskrieg in Photos und Texten* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003).

account: “Yelling like mad, the Russians would fall on the animal and tear it to pieces with their bare hands. . . . The intestines they’d stuff in their pockets – a sort of iron ration.”⁵⁰ Cannibalism was rife. Nazi leader Hermann Goering joked that “in the camps for Russian prisoners of war, after having eaten everything possible, including the soles of their boots, they have begun to eat each other, and what is more serious, have also eaten a German sentry.”⁵¹

Hundreds of thousands of Soviet prisoners were sent to Nazi concentration camps, including Auschwitz, which was originally built to house and exploit them. Thousands died in the first tests of the gas chamber complex at Birkenau. Like the handicapped and Roma, then, Soviet POWs were guinea-pigs and stepping-stones in the evolution of genocide against the Jews. The overall estimate for POW fatalities – 3.3 million – is probably low. An important additional group of victims consists of Soviet soldiers, probably hundreds of thousands, who were killed shortly after surrendering.

In one of the twentieth century’s most tragic ironies, the two million or so POWs who survived German incarceration were arrested upon repatriation to the USSR, on suspicion of collaboration with the Germans. Most were sentenced to long terms in the Soviet concentration camps, where tens of thousands died in the final years of the Gulag (see Chapter 5).

The Romani genocide (*Porrajmos*)

Perhaps more than any other group, the Nazi genocide against Romani (Gypsy) peoples* parallels the attempted extermination of European Jews. Roma were subjected to virulent racism in the centuries prior to the Holocaust – denounced as dirty, alien, and outside the bonds of social obligation. (Ironically, the Roma “were originally from North India and belonged to the Indo-Germanic speaking, or as Nazi racial anthropologists would have it, ‘Aryan’ people.”)⁵²

The grim phrase “lives undeserving of life,” which most people associate with Nazi policy towards the handicapped and the Jews, was coined with reference to the Roma in a law passed only a few months after Hitler’s seizure of power. Mixed marriages between Germans and Roma, as between “Aryan” Germans and Jews, were outlawed in 1935. The 1935 legislation against “hereditarily diseased progeny,” the cornerstone of the campaign against the handicapped, specifically included Roma among its targets.



Figure 6A.4 Roma interned in the Nazis’ Belzec death camp in Poland. Of all demographic groups in Europe, the Roma and Sinti – long known as “Gypsies” – were probably the only ones destroyed in the Nazi holocaust in about the same proportion as European Jews. Roma and Sinti remain vulnerable across much of Europe, from Ireland in the west (where they are known as “Travellers”) to Romania in the east. They are widely depicted as a shiftless and/or criminal element, and are liable to discrimination, harassment, and vigilante violence.⁵³

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

* The term “Gypsy” has derogatory connotations for some, and is now often substituted by Roma/Romani, a practice I follow here.

In July 1936, more than two years prior to the first mass round-up of Jewish men, Romani men were dispatched in their hundreds to the Dachau concentration camp outside Munich. (The measures were popular: Michael Burleigh noted “the obvious glee with which unwilling neighbours and local authorities regarded the removal of Sinti and Roma from their streets and neighbourhoods.”)⁵⁴ While Hitler decreed a brief moratorium on anti-Jewish measures prior to the 1936 Berlin Olympics, raids were conducted in the vicinity of Berlin to capture and incarcerate Roma.

“On Combating the Gypsy Plague” was the title of a 1937 polemic by Heinrich Himmler, taking a break from his fulminations on homosexuals and Jews. It “marked the definitive transition from a Gypsy policy that was understood as a component of the extirpation of ‘aliens to the community’ . . . to a persecution *sui generis*.”⁵⁵ The following year, the first reference to an *endgültige Lösung der Zigeunerfrage*, a “total solution” to the Romani “question,” appeared in a Nazi pronouncement.⁵⁶ A thousand more Roma were condemned to concentration camps in 1938.

A few months after the outbreak of the Second World War, some 250 Romani children at Buchenwald became test subjects for the Zyklon-B cyanide crystals later used to exterminate Jews. In late 1941 and early 1942, about 4,400 Roma were deported from Austria to the death camp at Chelmno, where they were murdered in the mobile gas vans then being deployed against Jews in eastern Poland and the Soviet Union.⁵⁷ Up to a quarter of a million more perished in *Einsatzgruppen* executions, “legitimised with the old prejudice that the victims were ‘spies.’”⁵⁸

In December 1942, Himmler decreed that Roma be deported to the most notorious of the death camps, Auschwitz-Birkenau. There they lived in a “family camp” (so named because Romani families, unlike Jewish ones, were not broken up), while the Nazi authorities decided what to do with them. A camp doctor who spoke with psychologist Robert Jay Lifton described conditions in the Romani barracks as “extraordinarily filthy and unhygienic even for Auschwitz, a place of starving babies, children and adults.”⁵⁹ Those who did not die from privation, disease, or horrific medical experiments were finally consigned to the gas chambers in August 1944. In all, “about 20,000 of the 23,000 German and Austrian Roma and Sinti deported to Auschwitz were killed there.”⁶⁰

When the toll of the camps is combined with *Einsatzgruppen* operations, the outcome in terms of Romani mortality rates was not very different from the Jewish Holocaust. From a much smaller population, the Roma lost between 500,000 and 1.5 million of their members in the catastrophe that they call the *Porrajmos* (“Devouring”). While the lower figure is standard, Romani scholar Ian Hancock argues that it is “grossly underestimated,” failing to recognize the extent to which Romani victims of (for example) the *Einsatzgruppen* death squads were designated as “partisans” or “asocials,” or assigned other labels that tended to obscure ethnic identity.⁶¹ When to the camp victims are added the huge numbers of Roma – perhaps more than perished in the camps – who “were

murdered in the fields and forests where they lived,”⁶² the death toll may well match that of the Armenian genocide.

Until recent years, however, the *Porrajmos* has been little more than a footnote in histories of Nazi mass violence. In part, this reflects the fact that Roma constituted a much smaller proportion of the German and European population than did Jews – about 0.05 percent. In addition, most Roma before and after the Second World War were illiterate, and thus unable to match the outpouring of victims’ testimonies and academic analyses by Jewish survivors and scholars. Finally, and relatedly, while anti-semitism subsided dramatically after the war, Roma continued to be marginalized and stigmatized by European societies, as they remain today.

The result, in historian Sybil Milton’s words, was “a tacit conspiracy of silence about the isolation, exclusion, and systematic killing of the Roma, rendering much of current Holocaust scholarship deficient and obsolete.”⁶³ Even in contemporary Europe, Roma are the subject of violence and persecution; in a 2009 essay, Hancock declared that “anti-Gypsyism is at an all-time high.”⁶⁴ Only since the late 1970s has a civil-rights movement, along with a body of scholarly literature, arisen to confront discrimination and to memorialize Romani suffering during the Nazi era.

Germans as victims

For decades after the end of the Second World War, it was difficult to give voice to German suffering in the war. Sixty years after the war’s end, it is easier to accept claims that the Germans, too, should be numbered among the victims of Nazism – and victims of Nazism’s victims.

Predictably, the debate is sharpest in Germany itself (see further discussion in Chapter 14). Two books published in 2003 symbolized the new visibility of the issue. A novel by Nobel Prize-winning author Günter Grass, *Im Krebsgang* (*Crabwalk*), centers on the twentieth century’s worst maritime disaster: the torpedoing of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* by a Soviet submarine, as the converted liner attempted to carry refugees (and some soldiers) from East Prussia to the German heartland, ahead of advancing Soviet armies. Nine thousand people died. In addition, a revisionist historian, Jörg Friedrich, published *Brandstätten* (*Fire Sites*), a compendium of grisly, never-before-seen archival photographs of German victims of Allied fire-bombing (see Chapter 14).⁶⁵

Estimates of the death-toll in the area bombing of German cities “range from about 300,000 to 600,000, and of injuries from 600,000 to over a million.” The most destructive raids were those on Hamburg (July 27–28, 1943) and Dresden, “the German Hiroshima” (February 13, 1945).⁶⁶ Both strikes resulted in raging fire-storms that suffocated or incinerated almost all life within their radius. As discussed in Chapter 1, various genocide scholars have described these and other aerial bombardments as genocidal.

Among the estimated eight million German soldiers killed on all fronts during the war were those who died as prisoners-of-war in the Soviet Union. Many German POWs were executed; most were sent to concentration camps where, like their Soviet counterparts, they died of exposure, starvation, and additionally overwork. "In all, at least one million German prisoners died out of the 3,150,000 [captured] by the Red Army," and this does not reflect those summarily shot before they could be taken prisoner.⁶⁷ In one of the most egregious cases, of 91,000 Sixth Army POWs seized following the German surrender at Stalingrad in 1943, only 6,000 survived to be repatriated to Germany in the 1950s.⁶⁸

A final horror inflicted on German populations was the reprisal killing and mass expulsion of ethnic Germans from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, often from territories their forebears had inhabited for centuries. As early as September 1939, in the opening weeks of the Nazi invasion of Poland, an estimated 60,000 ethnic Germans were allegedly murdered by Poles.⁶⁹ With the German army in retreat across the eastern front in 1944–45, large numbers of Germans fell prey to the vengeful atrocities of Soviet troops (notably in East Prussia) and local populations (especially in Poland and Czechoslovakia). Some twelve to fourteen million ethnic Germans were uprooted, of whom about two million perished. Much of this occurred after the war had ended, under the aegis of Allied occupation authorities, as the philosopher Bertrand Russell noted in an October 1945 protest letter:

In Eastern Europe now mass deportations are being carried out by our allies on an unprecedented scale, and an apparently deliberate attempt is being made to exterminate millions of Germans, not by gas, but by depriving them of their homes and of food, leaving them to die by slow and agonizing starvation. This is not done as an act of war, but as a part of a deliberate policy of "peace."⁷⁰

Moreover, an agreement reached among the Allies at the Yalta Conference (February 1945) "granted war reparations to the Soviet Union in the form of labor services. According to German Red Cross documents, it is estimated that 874,000 German civilians were abducted to the Soviet Union." They suffered a higher casualty rate even than German prisoners-of-war, with some 45 percent dying in captivity.⁷¹

FURTHER STUDY

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Michael Burleigh, *Ethics and Extermination: Reflections on Nazi Genocide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Essays on themes including "euthanasia," the German–Soviet war, and the racial state.

- Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995. Traces the evolution of the Nazi killing machine from the initial targeting of disabled and handicapped Germans to the mass slaughter of Jews and Roma.
- Robert Gellately and Nathan Stoltzfus, eds, *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001. Examines the Nazi campaign against “unwanted populations.”
- Gerhard Hirschfeld, ed., *The Policies of Genocide: Jews and Soviet Prisoners of War in Nazi Germany*. Boston, MA: Allen & Unwin, 1986. The links between the fate of the Jews and the Soviet prisoners.
- Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1995. Especially strong on atrocities against German women and workers under Soviet occupation.
- Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War against Homosexuals*. New York: Owl, 1986. The persecution and killing of homosexuals, described by a refugee of the Nazi regime.
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- Martin K. Sorge, *The Other Price of Hitler's War: German Military and Civilian Losses Resulting from World War II*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986. Concise account of German suffering in the war.
- Frederick Taylor, *Dresden: Tuesday, February 13, 1945*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004. In-depth study of the Allied fire-bombing of the historic German city.
- Alfred-Maurice de Zayas, *A Terrible Revenge: The Ethnic Cleansing of the East European Germans, 1944–1950*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994. The atrocities against ethnic Germans, ably cataloged.

NOTES

- 1 Christopher R. Browning, *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. ix.
- 2 Heinrich Himmler's announcement of Dachau's opening, quoted in Arno J. Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken? The Final Solution in History* (New York: Pantheon, 1988), p. 125.
- 3 Mayer, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?*, pp. 107–8.
- 4 According to Dominique Vidal, approximately 150,000 communists and left-leaning social democrats were incarcerated in concentration camps between 1933 and 1939. Vidal, “From ‘Mein Kampf’ to Auschwitz,” *Le Monde diplomatique*, October 1998.
- 5 Sywottek estimate cited in Adam LeBor and Roger Boyes, *Seduced by Hitler: The Choices of a Nation and the Ethics of Survival* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2000), p. 69.

- 6 Quoted in Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), pp. 134–35.
- 7 “The ‘work-shy’ were [defined as] males medically fit to work, but who (without good reason) refused jobs on two occasions, or quit after a short time.” Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 98.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 96.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 60, 63, 68, 70.
- 10 Geoffrey J. Giles, “The Institutionalization of Homosexual Panic in the Third Reich,” in R. Gellately and J. Stoltzfus, eds, *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 233.
- 11 “Lesbians were not subjected to formal persecution in the Third Reich, despite the fact that some zealous legal experts demanded this. . . . In a state which extolled manly, martial roughness, lesbians were less of a threat to the regime than men who subverted its crude stereotypes of ‘normal’ male behaviour.” Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 268.
- 12 Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War against Homosexuals* (New York: Owl Books, 1988), p. 62.
- 13 Himmler quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 89, 99.
- 14 Michael Burleigh, *Ethics and Extermination: Reflections on Nazi Genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 162.
- 15 Quoted in Plant, *The Pink Triangle*, p. 102.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 99.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 149.
- 18 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 166.
- 19 Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, Volume 1: The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 206.
- 20 Konnilyn Feig, “Non-Jewish Victims in the Concentration Camps,” in Michael Berenbaum, ed., *A Mosaic of Victims: Non-Jews Persecuted and Murdered by the Nazis* (New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. 163.
- 21 Plant, *The Pink Triangle*, p. 154.
- 22 Gellately, *Backing Hitler*, p. 75.
- 23 *Ibid.* For Web links and a bibliography on the persecution and killings of Jehovah’s Witnesses, see “A Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust: Jehovah’s Witnesses,” <http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/people/VictJeho.htm>.
- 24 Wolfgang Sofsky, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp*, trans. William Templer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 122–23.
- 25 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: Touchstone, 1997). See also the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum page on Bonhoeffer’s life and work at <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/bonhoeffer/>.
- 26 Henry Friedlander, “The Exclusion and Murder of the Disabled,” in Gellately and Stoltzfus, eds, *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, p. 146.
- 27 “Between 1907 and 1939, more than 30,000 people in twenty-nine [US] states were sterilized, many of them unknowingly or against their will, while they were incarcerated in prisons or institutions for the mentally ill.” See “Handicapped: Victims of the Nazi Era, 1933–1945,” *A Teacher’s Guide to the Holocaust*, <http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/people/USHMMHAN.HTM>.
- 28 Friedlander, “The Exclusion and Murder of the Disabled,” p. 147.
- 29 An opponent of such views, Ewald Meltzer, the director of Katherinenhof juvenile asylum in Saxony, decided in 1925 “to carry out a poll of the views on ‘euthanasia’ held by the parents of his charges. To his obvious surprise, some 73 per cent of the

- 162 respondents said that they would approve 'the painless curtailment of the life of [their] child if experts had established that it is suffering from incurable idiocy.' Many of the 'yes' respondents said that they wished to offload the burden represented by an 'idiotic' child, with some of them expressing the wish that this be done surreptitiously, in a manner which anticipated later National Socialist practice." Burleigh, *Ethics and Extermination*, p. 121.
- 30 Recall that under the UN Convention definition of genocide, preventing births within a group may be considered genocidal.
- 31 Burleigh, *Ethics and Extermination*, p. 123.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 See "'Wheels Must Roll for Victory!' Children's 'Euthanasia' and 'Aktion T-4,'" ch. 3 in Michael Burleigh, *Death and Deliverance: 'Euthanasia' in Germany c. 1900–1945* (London: Pan Books, 1994), pp. 97–127.
- 34 Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, p. 243. Peter Fritzsche also points to the connections between the "euthanasia" campaign and the Holocaust that would erupt shortly after: "Figuring out by trial and error the various stages of the killing process, from the identification of patients to the arrangement of special transports to the murder sites to the killings by gas in special chambers to the disposal of the bodies, and mobilizing medical experts who worked in secret with a variety of misleading euphemisms to conceal their work . . . the Nazis built important bureaucratic bridges that would lead to the extermination of Jews and Gypsies." Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2008), p. 118.
- 35 Friedlander, "The Exclusion and Murder of the Disabled," p. 157.
- 36 Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide*, p. 142.
- 37 Hitler quoted in Jürgen Zimmerer, "The Birth of the *Ostland* out of the Spirit of Colonialism: A Postcolonial Perspective on the Nazi Policy of Conquest and Extermination," *Patterns of Prejudice*, 39: 2 (2005), p. 202. Raphael Lemkin recognized the colonialist core of the Nazi enterprise: "Hitler's plan covered the Poles, the Serbs, the Russians, the Frenchmen. . . . The main purpose of the Nazis was a commission of a G[enocide] against nations in order to get hold of their territory for colonisation purposes. This was the case of the Poles, and the Russians and the Ukrainians." Quoted in A. Dirk Moses, "Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and the Philosophy of History," in Moses, ed., *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), p. 21.
- 38 Quoted in Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 129.
- 39 Heinrich Himmler, tasked with engineering the destruction of the Polish people, parroted Hitler in proclaiming that "all Poles will disappear from the world. . . . It is essential that the great German people should consider it as its major task to destroy all Poles." Hitler and Himmler quoted in Richard C. Lukas, "The Polish Experience during the Holocaust," in Berenbaum, ed., *A Mosaic of Victims*, p. 89.
- 40 Lukas, "The Polish Experience," p. 90.
- 41 Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), p. 457.
- 42 Anthony Beevor, *Stalingrad* (New York: Viking Press, 1998), p. 428.
- 43 Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939–1945* (New York: Picador, 2006), p. 291.
- 44 Quoted in Milovan Djilas, *Wartime* (New York: Harvest, 1980), p. 73. Omer Bartov has written: "It was in the Soviet Union that the Wehrmacht's back was broken long before the Western Allies landed in France, and even after June 1944

it was in the East that the Germans continued to commit and lose far more men. . . . By the end of March 1945 the *Ostheer's* [German eastern front] casualties mounted to 6,172,373 men, or double its original manpower on 22 June 1941, a figure which constituted fully four-fifths of the [Germans'] total losses . . . on all fronts since the invasion of the Soviet Union." Bartov, *Hitler's Army*, pp. 29, 45. Alec Nove points out that more Russians died in the German siege of Leningrad alone (1941–43) "than the total of British and Americans killed from all causes throughout the war." Nove, *Stalinism and After* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975), p. 93.

- 45 Alexander Werth, *Russia at War, 1941–45* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1999), p. 634.
- 46 Merridale, *Ivan's War*, p. 149.
- 47 If the upper-end estimates for those killed in Bangladesh genocide of 1971 are accurate (three million; see Box 8a), this might also match the intensiveness of Rwanda and the genocide against Soviet POWs.
- 48 Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941–45: A Study of Occupation Policies* (2nd edn) (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 414–15; Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941–45: German Troops and the Barbarization of Warfare* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), p. 110.
- 49 Quoted in Werth, *Russia at War*, pp. 635–36.
- 50 Merridale, *Ivan's War*, p. 290.
- 51 Goering quoted in Dallin, *German Rule in Russia*, p. 415.
- 52 Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, p. 116.
- 53 See, e.g., Anna Porter, "Fascism: The Next Generation," *The Globe and Mail*, May 9, 2009; "Bottom of the Heap," *The Economist*, June 21, 2008.
- 54 Burleigh, *Ethics and Extermination*, p. 167.
- 55 Michael Zimmermann, "The National Socialist 'Solution of the Gypsy Question,'" ch. 7 in Ulrich Herbert, ed., *National Socialist Extermination Policies: Contemporary German Perspectives and Controversies* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), p. 194.
- 56 Sybil H. Milton, "Gypsies' as Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany," in Gellately and Stoltzfus, eds, *Social Outsiders in Nazi Germany*, p. 222.
- 57 Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination*, p. 317.
- 58 Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, p. 125.
- 59 Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), p. 161 (the quoted passage is Lifton's paraphrase).
- 60 Milton, "Gypsies' as Social Outsiders," p. 226.
- 61 Ian Hancock, "Responses to the Porrajmos: The Romani Holocaust," in Alan S. Rosenbaum, ed., *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, 3rd edn. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009), p. 86.
- 62 Sybil Milton, "Holocaust: The Gypsies," in Samuel Totten *et al.*, eds, *Century of Genocide* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), p. 188.
- 63 *Ibid.*, p. 92.
- 64 Hancock, "Responses to the Porrajmos."
- 65 Günter Grass, *Crabwalk*, trans. Krishna Winston (New York: Harvest, 2004); Jörg Friedrich, *Brandstätten* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2003).
- 66 Eric Langenbacher, "The Allies in World War II: The Anglo-American Bombardment of German Cities," in Adam Jones, ed., *Genocide, War Crimes and the West: History and Complicity* (London: Zed Books, 2004), p. 118. See also Hermann Knell's study of the lesser-known attack on Würzburg in March 1945, *To Destroy a City: Strategic Bombing and Its Human Consequences in World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003).
- 67 S.P. MacKenzie, "The Treatment of Prisoners in World War II," *Journal of Modern History*, 66:3 (September 1994), p. 511.

- 68 Beevor, *Stalingrad*, p. 430.
- 69 Martin K. Sorge, *The Other Price of Hitler's War: German Military and Civilian Losses Resulting from World War II* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), p. 89.
- 70 Russell cited in Alfred-Maurice de Zayas, *A Terrible Revenge: The Ethnic Cleansing of the East European Germans, 1944–1950* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p. 111.
- 71 De Zayas, *A Terrible Revenge*, p.116.