

German Yearbook of Contemporary History

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Holocaust and Memory in Europe

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Preface

When the first edition of the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (VfZ) appeared in January 1953, it was not clear whether this new journal would be accepted among historians or find a general audience. For this reason, the creation of the *Vierteljahrshefte* was a “gamble,” and in light of methodological uncertainties and the difficult institutional situation that prevailed at the time, it was perhaps even a “headlong rush into the future” (*Flucht nach vorn*).¹ Since that time, the field known as “contemporary history” (*Zeitgeschichte*) has been widely accepted as a historical discipline, and the *Vierteljahrshefte* has become a prominent feature of the international landscape of historical journals. It has, in spite of every innovation, adaptation, and modernization, preserved an unmistakable essence. The time is, therefore, right to open a new chapter in the history of the VfZ with the introduction of the *German Yearbook of Contemporary History* (GYCH).

The VfZ is published by the Institute for Contemporary History, Munich – Berlin, which was founded in 1949 as the “German Institute for the History of the National Socialist Era.” Consistent with the Institute’s initial purpose, the VfZ dealt at first primarily with the central questions of Adolf Hitler’s “seizure of power” in 1933 and the subsequent establishment of the National Socialist dictatorship. The earliest volumes of the journal were therefore generally dominated by topics such as the crises of the Weimar Republic, the rise of the NSDAP, the development and structure of the National Socialist system of government, the Second World War, wartime atrocities, and resistance. New emphases, such as the history of divided Germany after 1945, were first taken up only in the 1970s. Currently, three trends can be discerned. First, the history of National Socialism remains a central focus of the VfZ. Second, the maxim of the founding editor, Hans Rothfels, that “*Zeitgeschichte*” is the “epoch of our contemporaries,”² is being followed, leading to a greater emphasis on more recent events. Third, alongside the history of Germany and its place on the international stage in the twentieth century, more attention is being given to subjects beyond national history, providing a more expansive view of Europe – especially Eastern Europe – as well as North America. Attention is also being given to questions of post-colonial history.

The Institute for Contemporary History and the VfZ are inextricably bound together, and indeed, from the outside, they appear to be one and the same. The

1 Hans Maier, *Die Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, in: Horst Möller/Udo Wengst (eds.), *50 Jahre Institut für Zeitgeschichte. Eine Bilanz*, Munich 1999, pp. 169–76, here pp. 169–70.

2 Hans Rothfels, *Zeitgeschichte als Aufgabe*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 1 (1953), pp. 1–8, here p. 2; the quotes that follow pp. 7, 8.

Vierteljahrshefte, however, has always been more than just the journal of the Institute, as it has enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy, a development that can be attributed above all to the powerful position of its editors. These editors, who enjoy intellectual independence, have included, and continue to include, recognized leaders in the field. In the early days, they tended to operate at the intersection of history and political science. The editorial board currently includes Helmut Altrichter (Erlangen), Horst Möller (Munich), Margit Szöllösi-Janze (Munich), and Andreas Wirsching (Munich), the latter of whom serves also as director of the Institute for Contemporary History. These editors are supported by four associate editors: Elizabeth Harvey (Nottingham), H el ene Miard-Delacroix (Paris), Herfried M unkler (Berlin), and Alan Steinweis (Burlington).

If the founding fathers of the VfZ gathered around Theodor Eschenburg and Hans Rothfels took a “gamble” in 1953 when they gave a voice to the young discipline of *Zeitgeschichte*, then the editors and the editorial staff of the present day are starting an equally exciting experiment with the *German Yearbook of Contemporary History*. The GYCH will pursue multiple aims. With each edition organized around a single theme, the *Yearbook* will make available to a broad academic audience key articles originally distributed in German, offering their important findings in English translation, thus helping to overcome language and cultural barriers that continue to exist even in the twenty-first century. At the same time, the translated VfZ articles will be accompanied by new, original essays. In so doing, the GYCH will fulfill the same strict publication criteria as the *Vierteljahrshefte*. The VfZ is a peer-reviewed journal featuring articles that undergo a three-tiered review process. Following an anonymous screening and assessment of articles by the editorial staff, peer reviews are commissioned from experts in Germany and abroad. Then, after some discussion, the editors and the editorial staff decide which articles to publish.

Articles featured in the GYCH will have successfully withstood this strict process of peer review and quality control. Thematically organized, overseen by an international editorial team, and guided by experts from the Anglophone world, the GYCH will provide more than a selection of research on contemporary history originally published in German. It will reflect current thematic and methodological trends, illustrate the current state of the field of contemporary history in Germany and Europe, promote the exchange of ideas across the Atlantic, and serve as a bridge between academic cultures. The next two issues will deal with the arms trade, human rights, and international crises in the 1970s and 1980s, and with new research about Adolf Hitler, respectively. We wish the new publication as many informed and interested readers as possible.

Munich, July 14, 2016
Andreas Wirsching

Introduction

When the American co-editor of the present volume first arrived in Germany in 1984 as a graduate student specializing in the history of National Socialism, he found only a small number of German colleagues who shared his academic interest. He often found himself to be the only visitor at the the German Federal Archive or the Berlin Document Center who was ordering files from the period between 1933 and 1945. New academic publications about the Nazi years were so few and far between that he could afford to buy all of them even on his graduate student stipend. Although there was a good deal of public interest in the history of Nazism in West Germany, this did not necessarily translate into major support for serious academic research in the field. To be sure, West German scholars had laid much of the intellectual foundation for the study of Nazism as practiced both in their own country and elsewhere in the West. Moving beyond the debates over the nature of totalitarianism and fascism, which bore the mark of the ideological conflicts of the Cold War, works by Karl Dietrich Bracher,¹ Hans Adolf Jacobsen,² Martin Broszat,³ and Hans Mommsen,⁴ to name four of the most influential figures, became required reading for serious students of Nazism. In the 1980's, works by younger German scholars like Detlev Peukert,⁵ Ulrich Herbert,⁶ and Norbert Frei⁷ were being added to the canon. Certainly a subscription to the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* was a requirement for any serious university library in the United States or Britain. Nevertheless, despite the obvious historical significance of National Socialism, the main centers for the study of that subject were the United States and Great Britain, while the two Germanies lagged behind. In West Germany, the 1980's were the decade when many historians began to

1 See Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur. Entstehung, Struktur, Folgen des Nationalsozialismus*, Cologne/Berlin 1969.

2 See Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Nationalsozialistische Außenpolitik 1933–1938*, Frankfurt a.M./Berlin 1968.

3 See Martin Broszat, *Der Staat Hitlers. Grundlegung und Entwicklung seiner inneren Verfassung*, Munich 1978.

4 See Hans Mommsen, *Beamtenum im Dritten Reich. Mit ausgewählten Quellen zur nationalsozialistischen Beamtenpolitik*, Stuttgart 1966.

5 See Detlev J.K. Peukert, *Volksgenossen und Gemeinschaftsfremde. Anpassung, Ausmerze und Aufbegehren unter dem Nationalsozialismus*, Cologne 1982.

6 See Ulrich Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter. Politik und Praxis des "Ausländer-Einsatzes" in der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches*, Berlin/Bonn 1985.

7 See Norbert Frei, *Der Führerstaat. Nationalsozialistische Herrschaft 1933 bis 1945*, Munich 1987.

focus on the history of the Federal Republic, perhaps to the detriment of research on the Nazi period.

This situation has changed quite dramatically in the last two-and-a-half decades, owing, among other factors, to the end of the Cold War, the opening of previously closed archives, and the emergence of new generations of German scholars. Today, it is almost impossible to keep up with the volume of original scholarship about Nazism being produced by historians at German universities and research institutes. The thematic and methodological breadth of this work is also impressive, encompassing gender studies, transnational analysis, and culture-historical perspectives. An example of the level of innovation that has come to be expected by German scholars in the field is the book *The Shoe under National Socialism*,⁸ which received a major prize from the Verband der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands, the German equivalent of the American Historical Association or the Royal Historical Society, in 2010. Many recent specialized studies about the National Socialist period published in Germany have also adhered to more traditional approaches to social, political, international, and military history.

Closely related to this efflorescence of German scholarship about Nazism has been a significant increase in emphasis on the Holocaust. The German-produced scholarship on this subject has been voluminous, meticulous, and innovative. Whereas for several decades after 1945, German scholarship on National Socialism focused primarily on the collapse of Weimar democracy, the Nazi “seizure of power,” the leadership of the NSDAP, and the apparatus of domestic repression and terror, the persecution and mass murder of Europe’s Jews has recently moved closer to the center of historical narratives of the Nazi era and closer to the top of the agenda for academic research. This shift has occurred in parallel with a significant expansion of the attention given to the Holocaust in German popular culture and in the German education system since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War, and German unification in 1989/90.

These developments in united Germany were manifestations of a more general upsurge in awareness about the Holocaust in the United States and Western Europe, but they were also the result of a realization among German elites that a national deficit existed when it came to promoting understanding and memory of this greatest of crimes. The inadequacy with which this dimension of the German past had been confronted was brought into focus by a series of

⁸ See Anne Sudrow, *Der Schuh im Nationalsozialismus. Eine Produktgeschichte im deutsch-britisch-amerikanischen Vergleich*, Göttingen 2010.

high-profile controversies, including the “Historian’s Debate” of the late 1980’s,⁹ the highly public arguments over Daniel Jonah Goldhagen’s provocative book in 1996,¹⁰ and the series of disputes over the Wehrmacht exhibition in the late 1990’s.¹¹ The decision to erect in the heart of Berlin’s government quarter a national “Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe,” which was completed in 2005, symbolized the extent to which the Holocaust had moved to the center of discussions about German national identity, and reflected the historically self-critical ethos of the Federal Republic.¹²

German scholars had taken up the study of the Nazi persecution and murder of the Jews in the immediate post-war decades, although their limited enthusiasm for the subject and their aversion to cooperation with Jewish scholars who were themselves Holocaust survivors has been severely criticized.¹³ Works by Helmut Heiber,¹⁴ Helmut Krausnick,¹⁵ Hermann Graml,¹⁶ and Wolfgang Benz,¹⁷ all of whom were affiliated with the Institute for Contemporary History, laid the groundwork for later research on important aspects of the subject, but these studies were rather the exception than the rule. In his monumental book *The German Dictatorship*, Karl Dietrich Bracher emphasized the centrality of antisemitism to Nazi ideology, but did not devote much space to analyzing how it operated in Germany or in German-occupied Europe. Most of the foundational works of Holocaust history were written by non-Germans or by émigrés from Central Europe, most notably Raul Hilberg.¹⁸ It was only in the 1990’s that Holocaust research gained traction

9 See Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past. History, Holocaust, and German National Identity*, Cambridge (MA)/London 1988.

10 See Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, New York 1996.

11 See Christian Hartmann/Johannes Hürter/Ulrike Jureit, *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht. Bilanz einer Debatte*, Munich 2005.

12 See Claus Leggewie/Erik Meyer, “Ein Ort, an den man gerne geht.” *Das Holocaust-Mahnmal und die deutsche Geschichtspolitik nach 1989*, Munich/Vienna 2005.

13 See Nicolas Berg, *Der Holocaust und die westdeutschen Historiker. Erforschung und Erinnerung*, Göttingen 2003.

14 See Helmut Heiber, *Walter Frank und sein Reichsinstitut für Geschichte des neuen Deutschlands*, Stuttgart 1966.

15 See Hans Buchheim et al., *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, 2 vols., Olten/Freiburg 1965; Helmut Krausnick/Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges. Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1938–1942*, Stuttgart 1981.

16 See Hermann Graml, *Der 9. November 1938. “Reichskristallnacht,”* Bonn 1953.

17 See Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Die Juden in Deutschland 1933–1945. Leben unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft*, Munich 1988.

18 See Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Chicago 1961.

in Germany. Between the mid-1990's and the early 2000's, a number of important studies were published by young German scholars who belonged to a generation born mainly in the early-to-mid 1960's, including Frank Bajohr,¹⁹ Christian Gerlach,²⁰ Wolf Gruner,²¹ Peter Longerich,²² Beate Meyer,²³ Dieter Pohl,²⁴ Thomas Sandkühler,²⁵ and Sybille Steinbacher.²⁶ Since that time, a younger, and larger, generation of Holocaust scholars has emerged, equipped with, among other skills, excellent command of East European languages.

Unfortunately, a large number of these Holocaust scholars have found it necessary to leave Germany to take up professorships in the United States, Britain, Austria, Switzerland, and other countries. While German academic culture has provided a good environment for the production of high-quality work by doctoral students and junior scholars, the institutionalization of Holocaust studies has developed only slowly. This has been in part the result of a hierarchical academic structure in which permanent professorships, which exist only at the senior level, are few and far between. Additionally, in German history departments, professorships are defined not by subject areas but by historical epochs, making it difficult to dedicate a professorship to one specific historical event. The University of Frankfurt, in recognition of this problem, has recently established Germany's first professorship for the "Study of the History and Consequences of the Holocaust." This new professorship will work closely with the Fritz Bauer Institute, Germany's oldest center devoted to the study of the Holocaust, which has been based at the University of Frankfurt for some time. A further important recent step toward the institutionalization of Holocaust Studies was the creation of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History in 2013.

19 See Frank Bajohr, "Arisierung" in Hamburg. Die Verdrängung der jüdischen Unternehmer 1933–1945, Hamburg 1997.

20 See Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde. Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrussland 1941 bis 1944*, Hamburg 1999.

21 See Wolf Gruner, *Der Geschlossene Arbeitseinsatz deutscher Juden. Zur Zwangsarbeit als Element der Verfolgung 1938–1943*, Berlin 1997.

22 See Peter Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung. Eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung*, Munich/Zürich 1998.

23 See Beate Meyer, "Jüdische Mischlinge." *Rassenpolitik und Verfolgungserfahrung 1933–1945*, Hamburg 1999.

24 See Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941–1944. Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens*, Munich 1996.

25 See Thomas Sandkühler, "Endlösung" in Galizien. Der Judenmord in Ostpolen und die Rettungsinitiativen von Berthold Beitz 1941–1944, Bonn 1996.

26 See Sybille Steinbacher, "Musterstadt" Auschwitz. Germanisierungspolitik und Judenmord in Ostoberschlesien, Munich 2000.

Although the Institute has produced or sponsored important research in this area for decades, the new Center will enable it to expand this activity considerably, and promises to make Munich (where the Nazi party originated) a significant venue on the international landscape of Holocaust Studies.

The present volume offers a selection of pieces that appeared originally in German in the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* or in other publications sponsored by the Institute for Contemporary History. They deal with the history of the Holocaust itself as well as with questions of memory and historiography. They are supplemented by a translated version of a key document and the commentary that accompanied it when it was first published in Germany in 1953, providing insight into the sensibility of early attempts by German scholarship to address the mass murder of the Jews.

The volume opens with an historiographical essay by University of Freiburg historian Ulrich Herbert about the development of Holocaust scholarship in Germany. Herbert offers a retrospective look at the early phases of research, situating scholarly work in the contexts of post-war German history and the process of “coming to terms with the past.” He then describes what he sees as the salient characteristics of present-day Holocaust research, most notably its empathy for the victims and the extensive international networking among scholars in the field. Herbert’s essay is followed by a response by Peter Hayes of Northwestern University. In the spirit of transatlantic scholarly dialogue, Hayes shows how the developments on the German scene outlined by Herbert fit into broader trends in Holocaust historiography.

Next up is a translation of a classic article from the second issue of the *Vierteljahrshefte* in 1953. Hans Rothfels, the editor of the journal, published the text of the document that has come to be known as the Gerstein Report, which contains a graphic description of the gassing of Jews by a German official who was involved with it. Rothfels’ own evaluation of the authenticity and the historical significance of the document make for fascinating reading after many decades, reflecting early post-war concerns about the reluctance of some to accept the reality of the gas chambers. The Rothfels piece is complemented by an essay by Valerie Hébert of Lakehead University in Canada. Hébert examines the complicated provenance of the Gerstein Report and the historical context of its publication, and recounts how the Gerstein story has resonated in popular culture, most notably in Rolf Hochhuth’s controversial play, *The Deputy*. Rothfels had been a nationalist during the Weimar Republic, was then purged from his university position after 1933 on account of his Jewish ancestry, went into exile, ultimately returning to (West) Germany, where he served as one of the founders of the field of *Zeitgeschichte*. In recent years he has been the subject of some controversy, as several young German historians have characterized his pre-exile scholarship as an

intellectual antecedent to the colonialist practices of the Nazi regime in Eastern Europe.²⁷

The next section of the volume comprises two articles addressing the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, with a focus on issues of memory and historical writing. First, Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe of the Free University of Berlin looks at the collective memory of the Holocaust within the Ukrainian diaspora. The author analyzes an exculpatory narrative in which wartime Ukrainians did not play a role in the persecution and murder of Jews, and shows how this narrative has been deployed for political purposes in post-Soviet Ukraine. This essay is followed by a review of Timothy Snyder's book *Bloodlands* by Jürgen Zarusky, a scholar based at the Institute for Contemporary History. Zarusky criticizes what he sees as Snyder's artificial construct of an imagined geographical space, and argues that the narrative presented in the book misleadingly posits similarities between atrocities committed by the Soviet Union and those perpetrated by Nazi Germany.

The volume concludes with reports updating readers about the progress of two major German initiatives in the field of Holocaust Studies: the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History, and the document publication project *The Persecution and Murder of the European Jews by National Socialist Germany, 1933–1945*. Both of these projects reflect the sophistication, ambitiousness, and international reach to which the practitioners of Holocaust studies in contemporary Germany aspire.

*

Publishing the first volume of a new journal requires that one venture into unexplored territory. This applies all the more so to the editors of the present volume because of the transatlantic nature of the enterprise. We were able to bring the project to fruition only with the support of many colleagues. From the very beginning, the editors of the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* gave their support to the idea, which was further developed by the editorial staff of the VfZ, then still under the leadership of Hans Woller. Andreas Wirsching, in his dual capacity as editor of the VfZ and Director of the Institut für Zeitgeschichte, helped shepherd the Yearbook to completion and made certain that the requisite resources were made available. Editorial assistants Renate Bihl and Barbara Schäffler were always at the ready to help. The editors are grateful to our translators – Michael Howell, Jennifer Neuheiser, and Mirko Wittwar – as well as to Gabriele Jaroschka

²⁷ See Johannes Hürter/Hans Woller (eds.), *Hans Rothfels und die deutsche Zeitgeschichte*, Munich 2005.

and Martin Rethmeier of our publisher, De Gruyter Oldenbourg. Susanna Schrafstetter provided valuable editorial assistance as our submission deadline approached. The support of the Miller Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont made the American side of this transatlantic project possible. We hope that this volume will mark the inauguration of a successful and enduring journal.

Munich, May 23, 2016

Thomas Schlemmer and Alan E. Steinweis

Ulrich Herbert

Holocaust Research in Germany

The History and Prospects of a Difficult Discipline

On 2 July 1941, German troops entered the small town of Glubokoye in Belarus, located 80 kilometers east of the border with Lithuania. Initially, the Germans requested that the inhabitants hand over their stocks of grain. At the same time, they began to register the Jewish inhabitants and to assign them to forced labor. A report about the events in Glubokoye, later written by the brothers Rayak, states: “The Jews were forced to work much harder than they were able to, and, in addition, were humiliated and tormented. They had to endure the guards’ most disgusting whims: they were forced to sing, to crawl, to imitate animals, to dance, and to lick the Germans’ boots, etc.”¹

On 22 October 1941, the district commissioner ordered that all Jews had to relocate to the local ghetto within half an hour. There, the real martyrdom began. The ghetto was chronically overcrowded, and soon a famine occurred, given that it was prohibited to gather food from outside the ghetto. Individual inhabitants of the ghetto were repeatedly picked up, tortured, and killed by the Germans. The systematic extermination of Glubokoye’s Jews – referred to as an “operation” (*Aktion*) – began in December 1941, when the Germans singled out several hundred inhabitants and brought them to the nearby town of Borki, thus putting an end to the overcrowded conditions in the ghetto. In Borki, the brothers Rayak state in their report, “the Germans forced the young Jews to dance in front of the open pit; the older Jews had to sing Jewish songs. After being mocked in this sadistic way, the younger and healthy Jews were forced to carry the weak and the old and the invalids into the pit and to lay them down. Then, they had to lie down themselves. Afterwards, the Germans began, methodically and calmly, to shoot them all.”

1 Wassili Grossman/Ilja Ehrenburg/Arno Lustiger (eds.), *Das Schwarzbuch. Der Genozid an den sowjetischen Juden* (translated by Ruth and Heinz Deutschland), Reinbek 1994 [Original (1948): *Das Schwarzbuch über die verbrecherische Massenvernichtung der Juden durch die faschistischen deutschen Eroberer in den zeitweilig okkupierten Gebieten der Sowjetunion und in den faschistischen Vernichtungslagern Polens während des Krieges 1941–1945*]; First edition in Russian: Jerusalem 1980. This material is also discussed in: Ulrich Herbert, *Vernichtungspolitik. Neue Antworten und Fragen zur Geschichte des “Holocaust,”* in: idem (ed.), *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik 1939–1945*, Frankfurt a.M. 1998, pp. 9–66.

In the following weeks, the Germans gradually brought all the Jews in the area to the ghetto in Glubokoye, assuring them that no more “operations” would occur. Instead, they were told that the Germans needed skilled workers who would be given an identification card which would guarantee their safety. Under this false pretense, the Germans successfully assembled Jews from forty-two towns into the ghetto. However, the German officers and soldiers were primarily interested in the Jews’ property.

For days, the Germans transported in wagons stolen clothes, shoes, linen, dishes, sewing machines, knitting machines for the production of socks and caps, as well as other household goods. [...] The laundry worked day and night to clean the clothes of the murder victims. Jews worked in the laundry (just as in the other “restoration workshops”). During the sorting and cleaning terrible scenes occurred. The workers recognized and identified undergarments and clothes of their agonized relatives. Rafael Gitlitz recognized the underwear and the dress of his murdered mother. Manja Frejdkina had to wash the bloodstained shirt of her late husband Simon. The wife of the teacher Milchmann was forced to mend with her own hands her murdered husband’s suit into a ‘tidy’ condition. In Karl-Marx-Street 18, the district commissioner of Glubokoye had a special office that was tasked to monitor the workshops, to see to the bookkeeping, and to supervise the workers. Furthermore, this office prepared packages and sent them to Germany, filling orders from German authorities or individuals.

All German members of the district commissioner’s staff as well as the Gestapo were frequent customers of this office.

On the night of 18 June 1942, another “operation” took place. Mainly women and children were rounded up and brought to Borki the following morning. Several hundred people were led to the pits, where they were murdered. Those who survived knew that their days were numbered as well.

One year later, in August 1943, the Germans began with the ultimate clearing of the ghetto in Glubokoye. On 13 August, all surviving inhabitants, approximately three thousand people, were rounded up, marched to Borki, and murdered in front of pits. “The German newspapers reported that a major cluster of 3,000 partisans, led by a seventy-year-old Rabbi, had been eradicated in Glubokoye.”

The Rayak brothers’ report of the events in Glubokoye describes the daily routine of the Holocaust as it happened almost everywhere in Belarus, the Ukraine, the Baltic, and the German-occupied parts of the Soviet Union. Their report precedes the remarks that follow because it powerfully brings to life events that sometimes drift into the background in light of the multitude of political, artistic, didactical, historical, and pedagogical approaches that bear on anyone who has to deal with this subject.

The report is one of many of its kind, and not even one of the more spectacular ones. It describes the common succession of events that took place in a similar

way all over the occupied territories of the Soviet Union: the Germans invade an area – usually units of *Einsatzgruppen*, *Ordnungspolizei*, or sometimes the *Waffen-SS*, often accompanied by indigenous collaborators. Immediately after their arrival, the Germans begin registering the Jewish population. They compel the Jews to perform forced labor, and they mock and humiliate them. Shortly thereafter, the Jews have to vacate their homes and are forced to move into a completely overcrowded ghetto. This population is reduced repeatedly through mass shootings. At the same time, the Germans steal the Jews' possessions, and an excessive trade in stolen goods sets in. The inhabitants of the ghetto have known for a quite some time that they will probably all be murdered eventually, but they remain hopeful nonetheless. They hope to be indispensable as skilled workers, that their children will be spared, that against all odds they will still be able to flee, that the Red Army will come and liberate them. In the end however, the children are murdered first, eventually everybody else is shot, and almost nobody survives. And we possess reports describing these terrible events only for those places where at least one person survived.

This is all very far from the popular image of the cold, almost clinical industrial mass murder that has over the years and decades generally shaped our understanding of the Holocaust, one in which the genocide of the Jews took place almost automatically at the hands of faceless perpetrators, and in which the victims likewise appear nameless and unreal. However, the genocide that took place in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union was not a secret known only to insiders. There was no mechanized, sterile mass murder exceeding all understanding. Rather, what unfolded there were apocalyptic, altogether primitive massacres conducted in cooperation with all of the German authorities that worked in the region; prepared and accompanied by virtually every conceivable form of humiliation and torment, marked by an almost incomprehensible cruelty and a constant, all-encompassing corruption.

In the Rayak brothers' report, the victims do not appear as nameless figures, but instead as people with personal histories and fates, with jobs and families, embodying good qualities and bad, just as diverse as we would expect people to be. What is often forgotten is that among the victims, the number of children was disproportionately high. It is an often unacknowledged fact that approximately one quarter of the six million Holocaust victims – that is, 1.5 million – were children under fourteen years of age. When presented as the fates of individual human beings, this number becomes completely unbearable.

This striking report about the events in Glubokoye, with its many details, and containing names of victims as well as perpetrators and witnesses, dates from 1944. It belongs to the witness reports collected and prepared for publication by the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. This committee consisted of a group

of Jewish intellectuals chaired by Ilya Ehrenburg, and later by Vasily Grossman, who were (at the suggestion of Albert Einstein) charged with collecting reports about mass murders by Germans in the occupied territories of the Soviet Union for the purpose of publishing them in the *Black Book: The Ruthless Murder of Jews by German-Fascist Invaders Throughout the Temporarily-Occupied Regions of the Soviet Union and in the German Nazi Death Camps Established on Occupied Polish Soil during the War 1941–1945*. After requests for information appeared in newspapers, mainly Yiddish language ones, numerous eyewitness-reports about the persecution and murder of the Jews reached the committee's editorial staff. The committee collected the reports, analyzed them, and selected 118 documents for publication. In 1947, the typesetting of the book was completed. In the meantime, however, Soviet authorities and party officials had developed considerable reservations about the project. Above all, the Soviets were concerned that the book would disproportionately emphasize the fate of the Jews compared to those of other peoples and ethnic groups. Eventually, the Soviet government prohibited the printing of the book, and the committee was suspended. In 1952, the members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee were – with the exception of Ehrenburg and Grossmann – charged with nationalist tendencies in a show trial. The book was only published in a partial Israeli edition in 1980, followed by a complete version in German in 1994.²

As an example, this report makes two things obvious. First, it demonstrates that a significant amount of nuanced, precise, and reliable information about the Holocaust in Eastern Europe was actually already available during and shortly after the war. Second, it shows the degree to which political interests prevented the dissemination of existing information that provided precise and substantial details about these crimes against humanity.

Diverse, nuanced, and detailed reports about the Holocaust were also presented at the Nuremberg trials. Nonetheless, the genocide against the Jews was not dealt with as a charge in its own right, but rather was categorized under the term “crimes against humanity,” a term which is still absurdly translated into German as *Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit*, that is, “crimes against humaneness.” Even during the preparations for the Nuremberg trials, it was understood as a

² See Ilja Altmann, Das Schicksal des “Schwarzbuches,” in: Grossman/Ehrenburg/Lustiger (eds.), *Schwarzbuch*, pp. 1063–84; Arno Lustiger, Einführung des Herausgebers der deutschen Ausgabe, in: *ibid.*, pp. 11–13; Arno Lustiger, *Rotbuch: Stalin und die Juden. Die tragische Geschichte des Jüdischen Antifaschistischen Komitees und der sowjetischen Juden*, Berlin 1998; Joshua Rubenstein (ed.), *Stalin's Secret Pogrom. The Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee*, New Haven/CT 2001; Leonid Luks (ed.), *Der Spätstalinismus und die “jüdische Frage.” Zur antisemitischen Wendung des Kommunismus*, Cologne 1998.

rule that the crimes committed against the Jews would not be distinguished from crimes committed against other ethnic or national groups, especially since many nations insisted that nationality, and not religious orientation, should serve as the decisive criterion for defining the victims. Indeed, the genocide committed against the Jews was dealt with repeatedly and often in much more detail in the subsequent Nuremberg military tribunals, but it was never treated as the primary issue, and as a result, the Holocaust did not feature prominently in the world's perception of the Nuremberg trials.³ After all, it was not the Western allies that had liberated the large concentration camps in the East and the remnants of the extermination camps, and they were poorly as well as very inconsistently informed about events that occurred in Eastern Europe during the war. For this reason, in the West, National Socialist mass crimes have been symbolized for decades by Buchenwald, Dachau and Bergen-Belsen rather than by Treblinka, Sobibór, Auschwitz, or Babi Yar, or any of the countless execution sites in the large territories of East Central and Southeast Europe. Over time, the perception of concentration camps and the Holocaust began to overlap, eventually becoming almost identical. Anybody pointing out today that the great majority of Western European Jews deported to Auschwitz never actually entered the camp itself, but were sent from the platform directly to the gas chambers, will encounter irritation and doubt. The onset of the Cold War further intensified this tendency, all the more so in those countries dominated by the Soviet Union – including East Germany – where the memory of the Holocaust was systematically suppressed since 1956 at the latest. Because the genocide against the Jews did not fit the narrative of capital and labor, imperialism and fascism, a long-lasting legend emerged in the Eastern Bloc as well: the Jews had supposedly been exploited as forced laborers by German enterprises and had been murdered in the process.⁴

At the very least, however, the documents collected for the Nuremberg Trials provided an initial and broad source foundation for Holocaust research, and the first major studies by Reitlinger (1953), Poliakov and Wulf (1955) and Tenenbaum

³ See also Kim C. Priemel/Alexa Stiller (eds.), *NMT. Die Nürnberger Militärtribunale zwischen Geschichte, Gerechtigkeit und Rechtschöpfung*, Hamburg 2013; Kurt Pätzold, *Im Rückspiegel: Nürnberg. Der Prozess gegen die deutschen Hauptkriegsverbrecher 1945/46*, Cologne 2006; Jörg Osterloh/Clemens Vollnhals (eds.), *NS-Prozesse und deutsche Öffentlichkeit. Besatzungszeit, frühe Bundesrepublik und DDR*, Göttingen 2011.

⁴ On this see Ulrich Herbert/Olaf Groehler, *Zweierlei Bewältigung. Vier Beiträge über den Umgang mit der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit in den beiden deutschen Staaten*, Hamburg 1992; Jeffrey Herf, *Zweierlei Erinnerung. Die NS-Vergangenheit im geteilten Deutschland*, Berlin 1998; Jürgen Danyel (ed.), *Die geteilte Vergangenheit. Zum Umgang mit Nationalsozialismus und Widerstand in beiden deutschen Staaten*, Berlin 1995.

(1952), as well as, of course, the extensive study by Raul Hilberg, were based primarily on these sources.⁵ Information was therefore available for an English-speaking audience, but for almost twenty years after the war, the Holocaust did not play a major role in American, British, or French research dealing with the time period between 1939 and 1945. These scholars, and those from other countries who had been involved in the war, were far too preoccupied with the consequences of the war as well the dangers of the Cold War. Nevertheless, reading these studies today, one is astounded by the amount of information that was already available and by the degree to which interconnected developments were already understood.

The situation was somewhat different in the Federal Republic of Germany. After all, hundreds of thousands of Germans had witnessed the actions taken against the Jews, especially in Eastern Europe, where Germans had very often participated directly in the atrocities. To protect themselves from prosecution and extradition after the war, and thus to save their own lives, they had to conceal their knowledge. Moreover, any public acknowledgement of these mass crimes had to be systematically erased. Therefore, for West Germans, into the late 1950s (and even beyond), the central question regarding the Holocaust was not so much *what* had happened, but rather *whether* it had happened at all. For a long time, even those Germans who were well-disposed towards the victims of National Socialism suspected that the post-war reports about the genocide of the Jews were the products of western or even Jewish propaganda (many equated the two). Since many Germans still remembered the propaganda battles of the First World War with its reports of Huns hacking off the hands of Belgian children, after the Second World War, the reports, and also the first books, about the mass killings in the East, most of which were written by Jews, were met with reservations – or, depending on the level of education, they were relativized in broad strokes following the pattern of “war is always terrible,” or by pointing out the hypocrisy of the accusers.

This refusal to acknowledge the truth was still evident during the first West German trials for National Socialist crimes in the 1960s. It was the victims who testified about the mass murders, and one of the main topics covered by the media

⁵ See Gerald Reitlinger, *The Final Solution. The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe*, London 1953 (in German: *Die Endlösung. Hitlers Versuch der Ausrottung der Juden Europas 1939–1945*, Berlin 1956); Leon Poliakov/Joseph Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden. Dokumente und Aufsätze*, Berlin 1955; Joseph Tenenbaum, *Underground. The Story of a People*, New York 1952; Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Chicago 1961 (in German: *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden. Die Gesamtgeschichte des Holocaust*, Berlin 1982); also: Raul Hilberg, *Unerbetene Erinnerung. Der Weg eines Holocaust-Forschers*, Frankfurt a.M. 2008.

in West Germany was the hardly-concealed suspicion that witnesses had perhaps fabricated everything, possibly for financial gain. The Holocaust became a story the Germans were confronted with from the outside, something about which they knew nothing at all – a *Jewish* story, not a German one.

The different forms that this externalization assumed can be found in the preface to the German edition of Gerald Reitlinger's *The Final Solution (Die Endlösung)*. There, the publicist Rudolf Hagelstange wrote:

Thus the German who is seriously concerned with the dignity and honor of his nation may not, will not evade the subject of this book. The ambition of his spirit, his soul, should be for him to long for withdrawing from his everyday business for some hours and to start the dark journey to the dead souls of millions of his equals who were innocently slaughtered at the order of a tyrant who pretended to act on our behalf. No matter how dark this journey and how nightmarish the encounter with these sacrificed souls may be, our souls, the soul of our nation, will not find peace and will not be able to become certain of itself without this trip to the shadows that will only make the light in which we are walking precious and pure. Here the saying applies that gaining all the world is nothing if the soul is harmed.⁶

This text, with its mythological extravagance – the word “soul” appears six times alone – is a significant document, given that it attempts to bestow moral meaning on the act of a German audience reading an academic account of the million-fold mass murder committed by Germans, using Schiller’s “The Hostage” and the Gospel of Mark as support. The preoccupation with the Holocaust as catharsis for the Germans is revealing. Without this catharsis, the fortunate turn of history experienced by West Germans during the post-war period (the “light in which we are walking”) would have been unstable and not worth living for, that is, it would not have been “precious and pure.” Meanwhile, the Jews appear as “sacrificed souls,” “slaughtered” by an anonymous tyrant. It is difficult to imagine a text more distant from the report on Glubokoye quoted above, and it shows how attempts at gaining more accurate information on the genocide of European Jews were met with barriers of dull rejection, aggressive denial, mystic obfuscation, and especially constant efforts at offsetting one’s own afflictions against the suffering of the Jews.

The preface by Hagelstange also shows that, in the wake of Allied information campaigns, National Socialism, if not altogether damned, had become taboo among many West Germans. This development was accompanied at the same time by a process of abstraction and derealisation of the National Socialist past, which, to a certain extent, deprived that history of its actors and its locations. As

⁶ Rudolf Hagelstange, Ein Vorwort, in: Reitlinger, *Endlösung*, pp. XIII–XIV.

a result, Germans were able to publicly and passionately speak out against the previous tyranny without addressing concrete locations and actual people.

How long these processes continued to have an effect on German society becomes clear by casting a brief glance on Germany's generational structure. Most members of the *Einsatzgruppen*, the SS-units in charge of the concentration camps, the Secret Military Police (*Geheime Feldpolizei*), the firing squads of the police battalions and the *Waffen-SS* – in short, the thousands of hands-on perpetrators – were less than thirty years old when the war ended, having being born between 1914 and 1924. In 1970, they were therefore only about fifty years old, and they retired in 1985. The commanders of these units, fairly young themselves, were about five to ten years older. In 1975, when the radical generation of 1968 believed that they were separated from National Socialist crimes by aeons, members of the generation of Nazi perpetrators were actually at the peak of their second careers.⁷

Accordingly, in West Germany, the academic examination of the Holocaust began very late and very reluctantly. Crucial for this delay was – apart from institutional rejection and individual bias – the fact that the majority of official German records from the Nazi period were brought to the United States after the war, while for a long time, the records of the Nuremberg trials were considered biased because they were compiled by the victors' court and were not seen to meet academic standards of authenticity. Nevertheless, newly created research institutions in Munich and other cities began making more serious efforts to study the history of National Socialism. However, like for many historians of this period, the scholars working at these institutions asked the big question – how could this happen? – not in regard to the summer of 1941 and the beginning of the mass murder of the Jews, but rather in regard to January 1933, that is, how could the National Socialist tyranny develop in Germany? Initially, the policies of mass murder were only dealt with in passing, for example, by editions of important primary sources like the Gerstein Report (1953), Krausnick's edition of Himmler's memorandum on *Fremdvölkische* (ethnic aliens) in the East, Helmut Heibers's documentation of the *Generalplan Ost* (1958) or the memoirs of Auschwitz Commandant Rudolf Höß (1958).⁸ But beyond moral entreaties or sweeping

⁷ See Norbert Frei (ed.), *Karrieren im Zwielicht. Hitlers Eliten nach 1945*, Frankfurt a.M./New York 2002; Ulrich Herbert, *Rückkehr in die Bürgerlichkeit? NS-Eliten in der Bundesrepublik*, in: Bernd Weisbrod (ed.), *Rechtsradikalismus in Niedersachsen nach 1945*, Hildesheim 1995, pp. 1–17; Wilfried Loth (ed.), *Verwandlungspolitik. NS-Eliten in der westdeutschen Nachkriegsgesellschaft*, Frankfurt a.M. 1998.

⁸ See Hans Rothfels, *Der Gerstein-Bericht*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 1 (1953), pp. 177–94; Helmut Krausnick, *Denkschrift Himmlers über die Behandlung der Fremdvölkischen*

statements, no analytical connections were established between the pre-war years and the horrible, but somewhat erratic reports of mass murders in far-away Poland and Russia.

The diary of Anne Frank, on the other hand, published partially for the first time in 1949, gained considerably more significance. It was important because in this case, other than in the context of the Nuremberg trials or the reports about the atrocities at the concentration camps, the victims in the diary became visible as humans and were provided with names and their own histories. Indeed, the diary describes the time before Anne Frank was deported and murdered. It shows a life full of fear, but still a life, and one in the West at that. Anne came from Frankfurt and had fled to the Netherlands with her parents. The ultimate fate of Anne is only hinted at, while Bergen-Belsen, where Anne died, is not mentioned in the diary. Eastern Europe, the mass shootings, the ghettos, Auschwitz, Majdanek – all of this remains in the dark.⁹

For a long time, academic monographs remained isolated phenomena. The German edition of Reitlinger's aforementioned *Final Solution* did not receive much public attention. Comprehensive, systematic research was not carried out. Even though the publications of several academic outsiders like Joseph Wulf, Bruno Blau and, especially, Hans Günther Adler were repeatedly reprinted, they were largely ignored in academic circles, where they were not seen as meeting academic standards.

The crucial change did not occur in the field of history, but in the field of law. The resumption of criminal proceedings for National Socialist crimes, and especially the establishment of the *Zentralstelle* in Ludwigsburg (Central Office of the State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes) led to a broad, nearly all-encompassing investigation into the major National Socialist crimes. Even though the ultimate number and severity of verdicts seem quite inadequate compared to the crimes in question, the West German justice system nonetheless began an unprecedented historiographic experiment, in the course of which preliminary proceedings were conducted against more than 100,000 individuals, with an even higher number of witnesses being interrogated.

im Osten (Mai 1940), in: Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 5 (1957), pp. 194–98; Helmut Heiber, Der Generalplan Ost, in: Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte 6 (1958), pp. 281–325; Rudolf Höß, Kommandant in Auschwitz. Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen, ed. by Martin Broszat, Stuttgart 1958.

⁹ See Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank. 14. Juni 1942 – 1. August 1944, Heidelberg 1950.

In the context of the first large trials, especially the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial, the first significant studies of the persecution and murder of Jews that were published by German historians began to appear. Among them, to name only a few, were Hellmuth Auerbach, Martin Broszat, Hans Buchheim, Hermann Graml, Helmut Heiber, Helmut Krausnick, Hans Mommsen and others, who published their expert opinions for court cases in a first volume in 1958 and a second volume in 1966. Another historian was Wolfgang Scheffler, who provided a first short overview of the Holocaust as early as 1960, as well as Eberhard Kolb, with his book on Bergen-Belsen, published in 1962. This development reached a peak with the publication of the book *Anatomie des SS-Staates (Anatomy of the SS State)*, a compilation of expert opinions from the Auschwitz trial. For decades, these historical studies set the standard for knowledge of National Socialist extermination policies, and it took years until a similar academic level was reached again.¹⁰

In spite of these important publications, the Holocaust did not develop into a major subject for German historians. Instead, a rather paradoxical structure developed that has not been fully resolved to this day. In the course of the 1960s and 1970s, the information collected by German law enforcement agencies regarding the deportations of Jews from all over Europe, the events in the ghettos, the countless shootings, the large concentration camps, the extermination centers, and the death marches reached such a magnitude, depth, and complexity, that historians – especially German historians, but those from other countries as well – could not begin to make sense of the material until the 1990s, and even then only in certain subject areas. Initially, the justice system’s enormous collection of information was rarely and only reluctantly used by historians. While the public prosecutors tried to find out *what* had happened, historians concentrated on the question of *why* it had happened – without defining exactly what they meant by *it*. Attention was focused on decision-making processes that were often difficult to reconstruct, as well as on contradictions within the regime’s political leadership. Thereby, the perspective remained very much centered on Hitler, although only few sources established a direct link between Hitler and the Holocaust.

Due to Martin Broszat’s study of *The Hitler State*, Hans Mommsen’s early essays on the structure of the National Socialist regime, and not least, the works of Uwe Dietrich Adam and the American historian Karl A. Schleunes, serious

¹⁰ See Gutachten des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte, 2 vols., Munich 1958 and 1966; Wolfgang Scheffler, *Judenverfolgung im Dritten Reich 1933–1945*, Berlin 1960; Eberhard Kolb, *Bergen-Belsen. Geschichte des “Aufenthaltslagers” 1943–1945*, Hannover 1962 (revised and updated edition Göttingen 1985); Hans Buchheim (ed.), *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, Munich 1982 (first edition, Olten and Freiburg 1965).

doubts emerged beginning in the 1970s over whether it was historically accurate to attribute the initiation of the Holocaust exclusively to Hitler's worldview, will, and command.¹¹ These historians, who would soon be called "structuralists," argued that the initiation of the Holocaust was to be understood in the context of a number of mass crimes that had already been committed, or which were in the planning stages, and that German occupation policies for Poland, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union had to be taken into particular consideration. Moreover, non-governmental interests were involved in Berlin's policies of exterminating the Jews, and therefore the one-sided focus on Hitler was not only wrong, but also contributed to the exoneration of other individuals and groups that had directly or indirectly participated in the Holocaust. The initiation of the genocide could not be traced back to a single trigger, and neither could it be traced back to an early direct order from the *Führer*. To the contrary, extermination policies had gradually developed over the years 1941 and 1942 in the course of a dynamic process – a process of "cumulative radicalization."¹² These approaches were, without doubt, an important innovation and had a significant impact on German and international research. However, these studies did not remain free of dogmatic strictures. The importance that racist and especially antisemitic ideologies played in the reasoning and actions of large sections of the population, as well as those of specific ideological elites, was disregarded. From this perspective, the genocide often seemed to unfold almost automatically, without actual people being involved. In addition, the perspective of the victims was missing from these narratives, and this despite the fact that numerous publications that included reports by surviving victims had been published all over the world. Even the per-

11 See Martin Broszat, *Der Staat Hitlers. Grundlegung und Entwicklung seiner inneren Verfassung*, Munich 1986 (1969); Hans Mommsen, *Nationalsozialismus*, in: C.D. Kernig (ed.), *Sowjet-system und demokratische Gesellschaft. Eine vergleichende Enzyklopädie*, vol. 4: *Lenin bis Periodisierung*, Freiburg 1971, col. 695–713; Hans Mommsen, *Der Nationalsozialismus. Kumulative Radikalisierung und Selbsterstörung des Regimes*, in: *Meyers Enzyklopädisches Lexikon*, vol. 16, Mannheim 1976, pp. 785–90; Hans Mommsen, *Ausnahmestand als Herrschaftstechnik des NS-Regimes*, in: Manfred Funke (ed.), *Hitler, Deutschland und die Mächte. Materialien zur Außenpolitik im Dritten Reich*, Düsseldorf 1976, pp. 30–45; Karl A. Schleunes, *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz. Nazi Policy toward German Jews 1933–1939*, London 1972; Martin Broszat, *Hitler und die Genesis der "Endlösung."* Aus Anlass der Thesen von David Irving, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 25 (1977), pp. 739–75; Christopher Browning, *Zur Genesis der "Endlösung."* Eine Antwort an Martin Broszat, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 29 (1981), pp. 97–101; Hans Mommsen, *Die Realisierung des Utopischen. Die "Endlösung der Judenfrage" im "Dritten Reich,"* in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 9 (1983), pp. 381–420.

12 See Broszat, *Hitler und die Genesis der "Endlösung";* Browning, *Zur Genesis der "Endlösung";* Mommsen, *Realisierung des Utopischen.*

petrators were excluded – instead, institutions and structures rather than people appeared responsible for the genocide.

What is more remarkable is that these lines of argument did not initially result in more intense research, but merely led to a war of interpretations, as there remained a lack of empirically-sound, region-based research.¹³ However, this obvious deficiency was not, as was sometimes assumed, the result of an insufficient availability of sources. Indeed, most archives in East European countries remained closed to Western historians until 1990/91, but those archival collections available in the West, and especially the records produced in the course of West German investigations and criminal proceedings against National Socialist perpetrators, were substantial enough to allow for intensive research. Studies like those by Wolfgang Scheffler and Adalbert Rückerl, as well as the publication of court decisions – some of them quite extensive and sophisticated – provided important evidence.¹⁴ However, the mainly theoretical debates among West German historians gave rise to the view that enough was known about the facts of the mass murders, while the actual challenge lay in their political categorization and historical interpretation. This conviction, which actually reflected a common and persistent outlook held by the general public, also reveals that historians refused openly and directly to engage with the past. The focus on interpretation of the genocide produced an exonerating effect at the exact moment when a discourse marked by avoidance became clearly prevalent – as with the so-called 1986/87 *Historikerstreit* (“historians’ debate”).¹⁵

An important result of this development, however, was that the Holocaust was now recognized as a subject of academic research. Historical overviews of Nazi Germany published in the 1970s and early 1980s continued to struggle to find a perspective that allowed them to integrate the Holocaust into the overall history of National Socialism. Nonetheless, the work of German historians aligned increasingly with international research, above all, that which what was

13 See Eberhard Jäckel/Jürgen Rohwer (eds.), *Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg. Entschlußbildung und Verwirklichung*, Stuttgart 1984; summarizing Ian Kershaw, *Der NS-Staat. Geschichtsinterpretationen und Kontroversen im Überblick*, Reinbek 2006, pp. 114–208.

14 See Wolfgang Scheffler/Helge Grabitz, *Der Getto-Aufstand Warschau 1943 aus der Sicht der Täter und Opfer in Aussagen vor deutschen Gerichten*, Munich 1993; Adalbert Rückerl, *NS-Verbrechen vor Gericht. Versuch einer Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, Heidelberg 1984; Justiz und NS-Verbrechen. Sammlung deutscher Strafurteile wegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen 1945–1966, 22 vols., ed. by Adelheid L. Rüter-Ehlermann et al., Amsterdam 1968–1981.

15 See “Historikerstreit.” *Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung*, Munich 1987; Richard J. Evans, *Im Schatten Hitlers? Historikerstreit und Vergangenheitsbewältigung in der Bundesrepublik*, Frankfurt a.M. 1991.

being produced in Western countries, a trend that is noticeable beginning with Hilberg's study, first published in German in 1982 (and then finally more widely distributed through publication in the "Black Series" of the S. Fischer Verlag). By then, the overview by Leni Yahil had also been published, even though it was not widely noticed in West Germany.¹⁶

One should not forget that the Holocaust was also not exactly a focal point of historical research in the United States or Great Britain, and that studies published there showed similar gaps and deficits to those produced by German historians. The exception were studies from Israel that focused on the victims, given that Yad Vashem, a distinguished research institute focusing on the murder of the Jews, had been established shortly after the Second World War. However, these studies, like the work produced by Polish historians, were long neglected by West German scholars.

The situation was different in East Germany. For decades, East German historians interpreted the Holocaust not as the result of a murderous strategy motivated by racism and focusing on the Jews, but as the outcome of a different objective, one that was only indirectly aimed at the Jews. First, in the 1950s, the persecution of the Jews was interpreted as an attempt to intimidate the working classes. It later came to be understood as the side effect of a strategy aimed at controlling and exploiting the occupied territories, as it had been devised in the Generalplan Ost. Only with the work of Kurt Pätzold and the relevant passages in an overview titled *Germany in the Second World War* was there any noticeable change in East Germany during the 1980s. Nonetheless, "Holocaust research" in the strict sense of the term never existed in East Germany.¹⁷

By contrast, in West Germany, as a consequence of the growing critique of the mainly theoretical debates over the theory of fascism and structuralism, beginning in the early 1980s a new turn toward the concrete and empirical eventually gave rise to new approaches such as the history of everyday life under National Socialism.¹⁸ In combination with the analysis of National Socialist extermination

¹⁶ See Raul Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, 3 vols., Frankfurt a.M. 1990; Leni Yahil, *Die Shoah. Überlebenskampf und Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, Munich 1998 (original edition in English: New York 1990).

¹⁷ See Kurt Pätzold, *Faschismus, Rassenwahn, Judenverfolgung. Eine Studie zur politischen Strategie und Taktik des faschistischen deutschen Imperialismus (1933–1935)*, Berlin 1975; *Deutschland im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 6 vols., Berlin 1974–1985.

¹⁸ See Martin Broszat et al. (eds.), *Bayern in der NS-Zeit*, 6 vols., Munich/Vienna 1977–1983; Lutz Niethammer (ed.), *Lebensgeschichte und Sozialkultur im Ruhrgebiet 1930 bis 1960*, 3 vols., Bonn/Berlin 1983–1985; Detlev Peukert, *Volksgenossen und Gemeinschaftsfremde. Anpassung, Ausmerze und Aufbegehren unter dem Nationalsozialismus*, Cologne 1982. As Peukert later re-

policies, the significance of these new approaches lay in re-concretizing and re-historicizing the history of the National Socialist regime. The history of everyday life attempted to place the victims of National Socialist terror and extermination policies at center stage, and in fact increasingly focused on *all* victims. Such initiatives, which generally occurred outside of universities and research institutions,¹⁹ were eventually taken up by professional historians, a development that found expression in a growing number of studies of “Gypsies,” handicapped persons, “asocials,” homosexuals, prisoners of war, forced laborers, and other persecuted groups – but then, remarkably, they said less about the genocide against the Jews.²⁰ Nonetheless, this development gradually made it possible to understand the regime’s racist politics as something that was real and whose traditions could be uncovered in German history. As a consequence, it was recognized that the racial-hygienically motivated persecutions of various groups of victims in Germany, and the ruthless actions taken against Slavic peoples and especially against Jews, were closely interconnected, and subsequently, more research began to focus on these interconnections.²¹

At the same time, the Wehrmacht and the part that it played in the regime’s war and occupation policies, above all in Eastern Europe, received more attention, not least because of the voluminous series *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg (Germany and the Second World War)*. It was above all the early volumes of this series, published over a span of almost forty years, that advanced

marked self-critically, his influential book dealt with the persecution of the Jews only in passing when compared to other groups of victims.

19 See *Alltagsgeschichte der NS-Zeit. Neue Perspektive oder Trivialisierung?* Kolloquien des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte, Munich 1984; Alf Lüdtke, *Alltagsgeschichte. Zur Rekonstruktion historischer Erfahrungen und Lebensweisen*, Frankfurt a.M. 1989; Winfried Schulze (ed.), *Sozialgeschichte, Alltagsgeschichte, Mikro-Historie. Eine Diskussion*, Göttingen 1994.

20 See for example Hans-Walter Schmuhl, *Rassenhygiene, Nationalsozialismus, Euthanasie. Von der Verhütung zur Vernichtung “lebensunwerten Lebens,” 1890–1945*, Göttingen 1987; Burkhard Jellonek, *Homosexuelle unter dem Hakenkreuz. Die Verfolgung der Homosexuellen im Dritten Reich*, Paderborn 1990; Ulrich Herbert, *Fremdarbeiter. Politik und Praxis des “Ausländer-Einsatzes” in der Kriegswirtschaft des Dritten Reiches*, Berlin/Bonn 1985; Wolfgang Ayas, *“Asoziale” im Nationalsozialismus*, Stuttgart 1995.

21 See Ulrich Herbert, *Traditionen des Rassismus*, in: idem, *Arbeit, Volkstum, Weltanschauung. Über Fremde und Deutsche im 20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt a.M. 1995, pp. 11–30; Hans-Walter Schmuhl, *Rassismus unter den Bedingungen charismatischer Herrschaft. Zum Übergang von der Verfolgung zur Vernichtung gesellschaftlicher Minderheiten im Dritten Reich*, in: Karl Dietrich Bracher/Manfred Funke/Hans-Adolf Jacobsen (eds.), *Deutschland 1933–1945. Neue Studien zur nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft*, Düsseldorf 1992, pp. 182–97; Michael Burleigh/Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State. Germany 1933–1945*, Cambridge 1991.

research in this field, especially studies such as the one by Stig Förster about the beginning of the war against the Soviet Union, or the one by Rolf-Dieter Müller about the economic objectives of the so-called *Ostfeldzug*, that is, the Eastern campaign. Christian Streit's study of the deaths of millions of Soviet prisoners of war in German captivity also proved very influential over the long run, as did the first academic study of the *Einsatzgruppen* in the Soviet Union, published by Helmut Krausnick and Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, which in part built on Wilhelm's dissertation from 1974.²²

It would require an historiographical project of its own to depict the extraordinarily intense, at times almost hysterical public debate over the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust that took place in West Germany between about 1985 and 2000. The dynamic development of Holocaust research in Germany can only be understood in the context of this long public debate about the past. Bitburg and Bergen-Belsen in the context of Ronald Regan's visit to West Germany, President Weizsäcker's speech given on the fortieth anniversary of the end of the war, the *Historikerstreit* mentioned above, the Jenninger debate, the discussion on Daimler-Benz and forced laborers, the Goldhagen debate, the dispute about compensation for forced laborers, and finally, the sometimes bitter dispute about the *Wehrmacht* exhibition and the debate over the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe – all of these events created an extensive level of public attention to the long-suppressed National Socialist past, and especially to National Socialist mass crimes, which had been unprecedented as well as unanticipated in unified Germany. Indeed, following reunification, many observers who had expected or hoped for an end of the German "history mania" were disappointed. Moreover, all attempts to suppress these debates through nationalistic battle cries about so-called *Sündenstolz* (pride in one's own sins) or *Gutmenschentum* (starry-eyed idealism) were not successful.²³

22 See Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden. Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941–1945*, Stuttgart 1978; *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, ed. by Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, 10 vols., Stuttgart 1979–2008; Helmut Krausnick/Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges. Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, 1938–1942*, Stuttgart 1981; on this see, Ralf Ogorreck, *Die Einsatzgruppen und die "Genesis der Endlösung"*, Berlin 1996.

23 See Peter Reichel, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Deutschland. Die Auseinandersetzung mit der NS-Diktatur in Politik und Justiz*, Munich 2007; Norbert Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik. Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit*, Munich 1999; Ulrich Brochhagen, *Nach Nürnberg. Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Westintegration in der Ära Adenauer*, Berlin 1999; Julius H. Schoeps (ed.), *Ein Volk von Mördern? Die Dokumentation zur Goldhagen-Kontroverse um die Rolle der Deutschen im Holocaust*, Hamburg 1996; Ulrich Herbert, *Der Historikerstreit*.

From an academic perspective, the *Historikerstreit* was soon considered largely fruitless. But then it is also true that within the context of this bitter and very personal debate, the National Socialist mass murder finally received major attention, and our insufficient knowledge and our lack of insight, which had been ignored for so long, became obvious. At the same time, Eastern European archives now became accessible as well, even though those in Russia remained open for only a few years. But it turned out that the Polish archives in particular, as well as those in the Baltic countries, held enormous amounts of material, opening up the opportunity for investigating the German policy of mass murder in the various occupied territories of Eastern Europe in detail. The same was true for Western and Southern Europe, even though the native historians of these countries treated and interpreted the deportation and murder of the Jews very differently in their own studies. Frequently, these historians focused primarily or even exclusively on the fate of Jews in their own countries, with the result that the French, for example, knew little about developments in Belgium or the Netherlands, remaining oblivious to substantial parallels. In the international context, this is currently one of the most significant obstacles to Holocaust research.²⁴

Nonetheless, in Germany as well as almost all other European countries, the 1990s marked the beginning of a long period of intensive empirical research on the murder of the Jews. German research abandoned the exclusive focus on Berlin as the center of decision making, and began to concentrate on a large number of perpetrators, sites of crime, circumstances, and victims. Studies by Dieter Pohl and Thomas Sandkühler of the murder of the Jews in Galicia, by Walter Mano-

Politische, wissenschaftliche, biographische Aspekte, in: Martin Sabrow/Ralph Jessen/Klaus Große Kracht (eds.), *Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte. Große Kontroversen seit 1945*, Munich 2003, pp. 94–113; Ulrich Herbert, *Academic and Public Discourses on the Holocaust: The Goldhagen Debate in Germany*, in: *German Politics and Society* 17 (1999) 3, pp. 35–54; Klaus Große Kracht, *Die zankende Zunft. Historische Kontroversen in Deutschland nach 1945*, Göttingen 2005; Heribert Prantl (ed.), *Wehrmachtsverbrechen. Eine deutsche Kontroverse*, Cologne 1999; Ute Heimrod (ed.), *Der Denkmalstreit – das Denkmal? Die Debatte um das “Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas.” Eine Dokumentation*, Berlin/Vienna 1999; Constantin Goshler (ed.), *Die Entschädigung von NS Zwangsarbeit am Anfang des 21. Jahrhunderts*, 4 vols., Göttingen 2012; Henning Borggräfe, *Zwangsarbeiterentschädigung. Vom Streit um “vergessene Opfer” zur Selbstaussöhnung der Deutschen*, Göttingen 2014.

²⁴ On this see *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland*, vol. 5 and vol. 12, West- und Nordeuropa, Munich 2012 and 2015. One of the few examples of trans-national and comparative Holocaust research: Pim Griffioen/Ron Zeller, *Comparing the Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands, France and Belgium, 1940–1945: Similarities, Differences, Causes*, in: Peter Romijn/Bart van der Boom (eds.), *The Persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands, 1940–1945. New Perspectives*, Amsterdam 2012, pp. 55–91.

schek about Serbia, by Christian Gerlach about Belarus, and finally, Christoph Dieckmann's voluminous study of the Holocaust in Lithuania, to name just a few, shed light on the relationship between the regional German authorities – civil, military, as well as police authorities – and the central agencies in Berlin, and connected concrete developments in the respective regions to decisions and reactions in Berlin.²⁵ Furthermore, it became obvious that National Socialist “Jewish policy” in Eastern European regions occupied by Germany did not uniformly go into effect during the first weeks of 1942, but rather that each region had its own specific development and its own history, although the general direction was the same everywhere. Thus the “fateful months” between June and December 1941 proved to have been a phase of formation and standardization of the genocide.²⁶ The concentration camps were now also analyzed in more detail, for example, in studies by Karin Orth, Sybille Steinbacher and others. These studies shed light on the structure of the National Socialist camp system and the relations of the camps to their immediate vicinity, whether Dachau or Auschwitz.²⁷

In 1991, Susanne Heim and Götz Aly presented a book titled *Vordenker der Vernichtung (Masterminds of Extermination)* that attracted much attention.²⁸ In the course of their research, the two authors unearthed a variety of manuscripts and plans in universities and institutes in which developmental deficits and a

25 See Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien, 1941–1944. Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens*, Munich 1996; idem, *Von der “Judenpolitik” zum Judenmord. Der Distrikt Lublin des Generalgouvernements 1939–1944*, Frankfurt a.M. 1993; Thomas Sandkühler, “Endlösung” in Galizien. Der Judenmord in Ostpolen und die Rettungsinitiativen von Berthold Beitz, 1941 bis 1944, Bonn 1996; Walter Manoschek, “Serbien ist judenfrei.” Militärische Besatzungspolitik und Judenvernichtung in Serbien 1941/1942, Munich 1995; Christoph Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944*, 2 vols., Göttingen 2011; Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde. Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944*, Hamburg 1999.

26 Christopher R. Browning, *Fateful Months. Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution*, New York 1985; idem, *Die Entfesselung der “Endlösung.” Nationalsozialistische Judenpolitik 1939–1942*, Berlin/Munich 2003.

27 See Karin Orth, *Das System der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager. Eine politische Organisationsgeschichte*, Hamburg 1999; idem, *Die Konzentrationslager-SS. Sozialstrukturelle Analysen und biographische Studien*, Göttingen 2000; Ulrich Herbert et al. (eds.), *Die nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, 2 vols., Göttingen 1998; Sybille Steinbacher, *Auschwitz. Geschichte und Nachgeschichte*, Munich 2007.

28 See Götz Aly/Susanne Heim, *Vordenker der Vernichtung. Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung*, Hamburg 1991; idem, *Bevölkerungsstruktur und Massenmord. Neue Dokumente zur deutschen Politik der Jahre 1938 bis 1945*, Berlin 1991; see also Zygmunt Baumann (Dialektik der Ordnung. *Die Moderne und der Holocaust*, Hamburg 1992), who makes a basically similar argument.

lack of modernization in Central and Eastern European states were explained by overpopulation in these regions, and according to which a reduction in population was a precondition for the sustainable improvement of these countries' economies. During the war, more than a few of the experts who had produced these studies found employment with the German occupation administrations in Eastern Europe. According to Heim and Aly, this is where the "rational" starting point of Nazi Jewish policy in Eastern Europe was to be found, above all, for Poland after 1939/40 – a thesis that found much support, but also met with considerable criticism.²⁹ That such concepts and scientific elaborations had existed at all was what made the book sensational, even if one does not agree with Heim and Aly's very far-reaching conclusion that these ideas actually served as the impetus behind the initiation of the Holocaust. In this case, as Dieter Pohl put it, the socio-technological component of the Final Solution was raised from "peripheral phenomenon to the main factor of the story," while the significance of antisemitic convictions had almost disappeared.³⁰ It remained unclear how these allegedly technocratic concepts were connected with the political principles of National Socialism as a whole. From here, further questions arose. Was antisemitism merely propaganda for the masses, behind which lurked the cold-blooded, sober calculation of the elites? Was the widespread hatred of the Jews only used to facilitate the implementation of demographic objectives at the expense of a group that was already marginalized?

Similar criticisms were raised about the arguments made by Heim and Aly in a study titled "The Economics of the Final Solution," in which the authors stressed economic and demographic interests.³¹ According to the authors, the murder of the Jews in the Polish cities was above all a means of making room for the non-Jewish peasant population in the East, which was to be resettled from the

29 On this criticism, see the contributions in Wolfgang Schneider (ed.), "Vernichtungspolitik." Eine Debatte über den Zusammenhang von Sozialpolitik und Genozid im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland, Hamburg 1991. See, above all: Christopher R. Browning, *Vernichtung und Arbeit*. On the factions of German intellectuals involved in plans for occupied Poland, pp. 37–52; Ulrich Herbert, *Rassismus und rationales Kalkül: Zum Stellenwert utilitaristisch verbrämter Legitimationsstrategien in der nationalsozialistischen "Weltanschauung,"* pp. 25–36; Dan Diner, *Rassistisches Völkerrecht. Elemente einer nationalsozialistischen Weltordnung*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 37 (1989), pp. 23–56; Norbert Frei, *Wie modern war der Nationalsozialismus?*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 19 (1993), pp. 367–87.

30 Dieter Pohl, *Die Holocaust-Forschung und Goldhagens Thesen*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 45 (1997), pp. 1–48, here p. 8.

31 See Götz Aly et al., *Sozialpolitik und Judenvernichtung. Gibt es eine Ökonomie der Endlösung?*, Berlin 1987 (Beiträge zur nationalsozialistischen Gesundheits- und Sozialpolitik 5).

countryside into the cities in order to enforce the economic modernization of the region. Such arguments, which structurally fell in line with Marxist interpretations of rationalization, were certainly exaggerated. Nevertheless, they indicated a correlation between the National Socialist policy of mass murder and the megalomaniac restructuring plans of German economic planners, if only in the minds of German geographers and spatial planners, as they found expression in various versions of the *Generalplan Ost*.

Several years later, Aly presented another reinterpretation of the origins of the Holocaust.³² Markedly departing from his previous point of view, he now emphasized that a precondition for the initiation of the Holocaust was not so much the various concepts and plans, but rather their manifold and constant failures, which he demonstrated with the proposed “resettlement” plans for the so-called *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans) from East and Southeast Europe that had been agreed upon in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In order to make room for these settlers, large numbers of Poles and especially Jews had been expelled from the Warthegau and other regions. As a consequence, a process of more and more extensive deportation plans set in, and at the center were the Jews, who were to be completely pushed out of Germany’s sphere of influence into the eastern regions of the General Government, to Madagascar, or somewhere in Northern Russia on the Arctic Ocean. Ultimately, this process resulted in a system of interim solutions and compromises that only ended as a consequence of the failure of the various deportation plans, thus leading to the murder of the Jews, who were considered dispensable and could not be resettled.

With this, an empirical foundation was laid for an argument that had only been suggested up to this point, namely, that policies toward the Jews gradually grew more radical as alternative projects failed. From this perspective, the initiation of the Holocaust was placed within the context of German attempts to undertake a *völkische Flurbereinigung*, that is, an ethnic redistribution of the land in Central and Eastern Europe that began immediately after the war with Poland, and that was eventually supposed to result in a restructuring of Eastern Europe, reaching as far as the Urals.³³ However, this view did not explain why the

³² See Götz Aly, “Endlösung.” *Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden*. Frankfurt a.M. 1995.

³³ See Czeslaw Madajczyk (ed.), *Vom Generalplan Ost zum Generalsiedlungsplan*, Munich 1994; Mechthild Rössler/Sabine Schleiermacher (eds.), *Der “Generalplan Ost.” Hauptlinien der nationalsozialistischen Planungs- und Vernichtungspolitik*, Berlin 1993; Bruno Wasser, *Himmels Raumplanung im Osten. Der Generalplan Ost in Polen 1940–1944*, Basel 1993; Isabel Heinemann/Patrick Wagner (eds.), *Wissenschaft – Planung – Vertreibung. Neuordnungskonzepte und Umsiedlungspolitik im 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 2006; in regard to *Völkerverschiebung*

Jews alone were the victims of a policy of total extermination, and neither did it explain how the relationship between politico-ideological motives, above all, radical antisemitism, and so-called rational motives, especially economic intentions, was to be understood. Subsequently, these questions moved to the center of scholarship that followed.

From this point, Michael Zimmerman's extensive study of the Nazi persecution of Sinti and Roma, the so-called Gypsies, took the next step. Zimmerman demonstrated that the National Socialist policy of persecution was indeed based on the traditions of anti-Ziganism, but that these traditions became drastically radicalized when socio-biological approaches provided a scientific legitimization for existing prejudices.³⁴ Furthermore, neither a unified decision-making process nor a direct link back to Hitler (who was, in fact, disinterested in the "Gypsy issue"), nor a corresponding command structure could be established in regard to the murder of the "Gypsies." The racial stigmatizing of this group had, in fact, spread so far and had reached such an extent that the *Einsatzgruppen* in the Soviet Union killed the "Gypsies" they encountered during their murderous activities without explicit orders, in each case giving reasons that somehow seemed to be obvious: the "Gypsies" were spies, they posed a threat to the troops or the population, they were spreading diseases, and so on. Thus, the combination of an established, widely held prejudice with its "scientification" by numerous experts resulted in a racist construct that found its way into the convictions of the leading personnel of the criminal and security police and influenced locally-operating troops and the decisions that they made. This picture of a convergence of factors at various levels was very plausible, and in many ways could be transferred to the policies pursued against the Jews, although the dimension of purposeful, ideologically determined extermination was much more distinctive in regard to the Jews.

More recent research has focused on the study of the perpetrators themselves – their modus operandi, their motives, their worldviews, and their biographical backgrounds – and this has included the murderers on the ground who held the gun or shut the doors of the gas chambers as well as the decision-makers who were ultimately responsible. In his analysis of the members of Police Bat-

(population transfer) as an explanation for the initiation of the genocide, see Hans Mommsen, *Umvolkungspläne des Nationalsozialismus und der Holocaust*, in: Helge Grabitz/Klaus Bästlein/Johannes Tuchel (eds.), *Die Normalität des Verbrechens. Bilanz und Perspektiven der Forschung zu den nationalsozialistischen Gewaltverbrechen*, Berlin 1994, pp. 68–84.

³⁴ See Michael Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid. Die nationalsozialistische "Lösung der Zigeunerfrage"*, Hamburg 1996.

talion 101, the American historian Christopher Browning showed that for these policemen, the prevalent motive was not the result of ideological indoctrination, extreme hatred of the Jews, or other ideological beliefs, but rather other factors: a dull climate of brutality, a pronounced esprit de corps, considerable peer pressure, and excessive drinking, all of which were wrapped together with progressive indifference toward atrocities of every kind.³⁵ Browning's study did not focus on the specific individual antisemitic motives of the members of the murder squads, but emphasized a general disposition toward violence that found an outlet when it was steered against the Jews by a political agenda. Daniel Goldhagen, on the other hand, whose book of 1996 attracted public attention in Germany like no other book on Nazi history before or since, construed that same unit's disposition toward violence against the Jews as an expression of "eliminationist antisemitism," which, he claimed, had been common in Germany.³⁶ Peer pressure, an inclination toward violence, and indifference were now no longer seen as German characteristics limited only to the Nazi period. However, the actual environment in which these men found themselves was indeed very specific to the Nazi period, and this general disposition toward violence became specifically charged with ideological and political beliefs, leading to a disappearance of inhibitions. The killings were backed by political and ideological constructs provided from above. In other words, the members of killing squads did not need any individual ideological motives to justify murder, it was sufficient that such motives were issued and believed, in any case accepted by the leadership.

Goldhagen's book quickly met with severe criticism, and today it has almost completely disappeared from serious discussion. However, the book has lasting merit inasmuch as it had the effect that the question regarding the participation, the knowledge, the consent, or the indifference of ordinary Germans toward the Holocaust was recognized as an important, indeed, crucial topic not only for the history of the war, but for German history in general – a point that was even conceded by those, such as Rudolf Augstein, who saw Goldhagen's arguments as a renewal of the accusation of collective guilt.

Beginning in the mid-1990s, the perpetrators also began to shift toward the center of German research, and they did so independently of the debate menti-

³⁵ See Christopher R. Browning, *Ganz normale Männer. Das Reservepolizeibataillon 101 und die "Endlösung" in Polen*, Reinbek 1993; see the compilation of Browning's contributions in: idem, *Fateful Months*; idem, *The Path to Genocide. Essays on Launching the Final Solution*, Cambridge 1992.

³⁶ See Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitlers willige Vollstrecker. Ganz gewöhnliche Deutsche und der Holocaust*, Berlin 1966, pp. 285–312.

oned above, which had, in any case, taken place mainly among American historians. An analysis of the biographies and actions of the leadership of the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* or RSHA) was able to identify a group of relatively young men, most of them well educated and with a middle-class background, who had been politically socialized under the influence of nationalist youth organizations and student groups, and who were quickly promoted within the National Socialist persecution apparatus after 1933. To be sure, any attempt to ascribe the crimes committed by the leadership of the RSHA solely to the political socialization of this specific generation is misguided, as is an exclusive focus on the perpetrators as a generational group of academically-educated mass murderers. Still, it became apparent that a connection could be drawn between the antisemitic radicalization of young, especially middle-class Germans during the Weimar period and Nazi policies of persecution that were undertaken against the Jews, further refuting the idea that the murder of the Jews was primarily an extreme act committed by subordinate brutes, or that it was the special obsession of Adolf Hitler and his inner circle. That there was some agreement that existed between the ideas of the technocrats, as analyzed by Aly and Heim, and the worldview of academics in the RSHA and the Einsatzgruppen, as analyzed by Michael Wildt and others, and that this particular convergence of ideas was based on a political worldview which had developed in the aftermath of the First World War, is a plausible connection that has since appeared again and again in existing scholarship.³⁷

Since 1997, international research, especially research in Germany, has been increasingly and strongly influenced by Saul Friedländer's masterpiece, which not only called for an integration of the perspectives of both perpetrators and victims, but actually met this challenge as well.³⁸ Friedländer's book presents such an abundance of quotations from diaries, letters, memories, and reports

37 See Raul Hilberg, *Täter, Opfer, Zuschauer. Die Vernichtung der Juden 1933–1945*, Frankfurt a.M. 1997; Ulrich Herbert, *Best. Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft 1903–1989*, Bonn 1996; Michael Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten. Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes*, Hamburg 2002; Klaus-Michael Mallmann/Gerhard Paul (eds.), *Karrieren der Gewalt. Nationalsozialistische Täterbiographien*, Darmstadt 2005; Gerhard Paul (ed.), *Die Täter der Shoah. Fanatische Nationalsozialisten oder ganz normale Deutsche?*, Göttingen 2002; Ahlrich Meyer, *Das Wissen um Auschwitz. Täter und Opfer der "Endlösung" in Westeuropa*, Paderborn 2010; Christina Ullrich, "Ich fühl' mich nicht als Mörder." Die Integration von NS-Tätern in die Nachkriegsgesellschaft, Darmstadt 2011; Markus Roth, *Herrenmenschen. Die deutschen Kreishauptleute im besetzten Polen. Karrierewege, Herrschaftspraxis und Nachgeschichte*, Göttingen 2009.

38 See Saul Friedländer, *Das Dritte Reich und die Juden*, 2 vols., Munich 1998 and 2006.

by Jewish victims of Nazi persecution that it seemed absolutely strange in retrospect that it had ever been acceptable to write history from the perspective of the perpetrators alone. Friedländer's argument in favor of an integrated history of the Holocaust that includes the perspectives of all involved parties had first been implemented by Raul Hilberg, who introduced the categories of perpetrator/victim/bystander, a conceptual framework that became a basic prerequisite of international Holocaust research. The integration of this multi-perspectival method is exhibited in the first overview of the Holocaust written by a German historian, Peter Longerich's *Politik der Vernichtung (Policy of Extermination)*, and perhaps most evidently in the structure of the editorial project *Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden (The Persecution and Murder of the European Jews)*.³⁹

The image of the Wehrmacht has also been thoroughly revised since the 1980s and 1990s. A number of studies have confirmed that the *Wehrmacht* collectively contributed to the mass crimes of National Socialism, while particular Wehrmacht units actively participated as executioners in mass murders. However, this research, as well as some early exhibitions about this subject, did not attract much public attention. Rather, the image of a "clean" Wehrmacht that had only participated in National Socialist crimes in exceptional cases largely remained intact, especially among the generation of World War Two veterans.⁴⁰ The results of newer research into the "crimes of the *Wehrmacht*" were presented in an exhibition organized by the Hamburg Institute for Social Research. The exhibition opened in the spring of 1995 and was shown in various German and Austrian cities. It documented the involvement of *Wehrmacht* units in the murder of Jews, in addition to the *Wehrmacht's* responsibility for the death of more than three million Soviet prisoners of war and the mass murder of Soviet civilians. After an initial delay, a very loud public protest was raised against the exhibition, while the exhibition's organizers were accused of "sullyng the honor of millions

³⁹ See Peter Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung. Eine Gesamtdarstellung der nationalsozialistischen Judenverfolgung*, Munich 1998; Dieter Pohl, *Verfolgung und Massenmord in der NS-Zeit 1933–1945*, Darmstadt 2011; *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland*, ed. by Götz Aly et al., 9 vols., Munich 2008–2016.

⁴⁰ For example: Horst Boog et al., *Das Deutsche Reich und der Zweite Weltkrieg*, vol. 4: *Der Angriff auf die Sowjetunion*, Stuttgart 1983; Rolf-Dieter Müller, *Hitlers Ostkrieg und die deutsche Siedlungspolitik. Die Zusammenarbeit von Wehrmacht, Wirtschaft und SS*, Frankfurt a.M. 1991; Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, *Rassenpolitik und Kriegführung. Sicherheitspolizei und Wehrmacht in Polen und in der Sowjetunion 1939–1942*, Passau 1991; Jörg Friedrich, *Das Gesetz des Krieges. Das deutsche Heer in Rußland 1941 bis 1945. Der Prozeß gegen das Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, Munich 1993.

of Germans” and “waging a moral scorched-earth campaign against the German nation.”⁴¹

Since the quintessence of the exhibition regarding the crimes of the *Wehrmacht* was academically substantiated and could hardly be disputed, the main criticism was directed against the format in which the exhibition was presented. It was criticized as being too suggestive and insufficiently nuanced, especially in regard to its use of photographic documents. Two years later, the exhibition was reopened after undergoing revision and expansion. Although the style of the presentation had been changed, the historical information was strengthened and corroborated. The debate finally culminated in the Bundestag, where the Wehrmacht exhibition and the questions it raised were discussed on 13 March 1997. The discussion began with a contribution by Alfred Dregger, former chairman of the CDU/CSU in the West German Parliament, who – speaking on behalf of World War Two veterans – stressed that:

The soldiers of the Second World War and their family members did not make up a small, definable group of our people, but rather, they constituted the entire population of that period. Almost every man was drafted [...] Therefore, this question [of responsibility] affects our relationship to an entire generation of our nation. Those who attempt – and such efforts are being made – to label the entire war generation as members and accomplices of a criminal gang, intend to cut Germany to the quick. This is what we object to [...] We cannot tolerate this.⁴²

This speech struck at the heart of the matter. Since May 1945, the consensus had identified a small, definable group of our people as murderers. Connecting the *Wehrmacht* to National Socialist crimes, however, met with resistance and denial, regardless of the evidence produced by historical research.

Representative Otto Schily responded to Dregger. In his remarkable and widely-received speech, he not only criticized Dregger’s remarks, but also included some personal comments. He told the story of his uncle and his brother, who, in spite of having being opponents of National Socialism, still had been forced to serve in the Wehrmacht – something his father would have also gladly done for reasons of patriotism. Schily then continued:

My wife’s father, Jindrich Chajmovic, an extraordinarily courageous person and one who was also exceptionally willing to make sacrifices, fought the German Wehrmacht in Russia

⁴¹ Rüdiger Proske, *Wider den Missbrauch der Geschichte deutscher Soldaten zu politischen Zwecken. Eine Streitschrift*, Mainz 1996; *Bayernkurier*, 22 February 1997: “Wie Deutsche diffamiert werden.”

⁴² Alfred Dregger (CDU), *Deutscher Bundestag*, 13. WP, *Plenarprotokoll* 13 March 1997, pp. 14710–11.

as a Jewish partisan. Now I am going to say something that, in all its harshness and clarity, must be accepted by all of us: the only person of the four people mentioned – the only one! – who risked his life for a just cause was Jindrich Chajmovic. For he fought an army behind which stood the gas chambers in which his parents and his entire family were murdered. He fought an army that waged a war of extermination and annihilation, an army that assisted in the mass murders of the notorious Einsatzgruppen, or, at any rate, did not interfere. He fought so that women, children and old people would not continue to be brutally slaughtered by the thousands. He fought a German Wehrmacht that had demeaned itself to such a degree that it had become an executioner of the racial fanaticism and the inhumanity of the Hitler regime, and had thus lost its honor.⁴³

This debate marked the turning point. It indicated that a far-reaching, though certainly not quite complete, consensus had been reached across party lines. From this point onward, the fact that the *Wehrmacht* had been highly involved in National Socialist mass crimes during the war was only publicly denied by the right-wing fringe of society.⁴⁴ Subsequently, intensified research, especially at the Institute for Contemporary History, strongly confirmed Schily's position. Particularly the studies by Dieter Pohl and Christian Hartmann, whose major study of the *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg* (*The Wehrmacht and the War in the East*) has not received sufficient attention, have described the hitherto unappreciated dimensions of the crimes, going considerably beyond anything that was presented in the *Wehrmacht* exhibition.⁴⁵

The German discussion of the National Socialist past reached its peak in these debates of the late 1990s, but in a way it also came to an end. There was still public controversy about the Nazi period, and more and more personal scandals were brought to light. However, when it became known that hundreds of highly compromised former officers of the SD and SS had worked for the West German secret services, or when it was leaked that German authorities had protected mass murderers such as Eichmann or Mengele from criminal prosecution, this did not

⁴³ Otto Schily (SPD), Deutscher Bundestag, 13. WP, Plenarprotokoll 13 March 1997, pp. 14714–15.

⁴⁴ The new version of the exhibition, ordered by Reemtsma in accordance with the results produced by the commission, was officially opened in 2001, and its statements on the crimes committed by the *Wehrmacht* greatly exceeded even those made in the first version. However, the presentation was more modest and completely abandoned the use of private photographs made by *Wehrmacht* soldiers. Although this exhibition was also rejected by the right wing, there were no longer objections against the historical substance of the exhibition. See Christian Hartmann/Johannes Hürter/Ulrike Jureit (eds.), *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht. Bilanz einer Debatte*, Munich 2005.

⁴⁵ See Dieter Pohl, *Die Herrschaft der Wehrmacht. Deutsche Militärbesatzung und einheimische Bevölkerung in der Sowjetunion 1941–1944*, Munich 2009; Christian Hartmann, *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg. Front und militärisches Hinterland 1941/42*, Munich 2010.

lead to bigger eruptions.⁴⁶ At this point, everything seemed possible and even probable, and whoever doubted this was obligated to produce evidence. Since there were no more taboos to break, no previously-hidden secrets to be aired out, except in the form of apocryphal theories about Adolf Hitler, dealing with the topic was once again left to libraries and the lecture halls of historians – still an important, indeed essential topic, but nonetheless, a topic for the history books.

Since at least the turn of the millennium, it is no longer possible to speak of *German* Holocaust research in the strictest sense. Unlike any other subfield of contemporary history, research on this particular subject is transnational both in regard to the subject as well as in regard to the level of cooperation among scholars. In this context, I would like to emphasize six points in particular. *First*, Holocaust research is highly concentrated on regions. Eastern Europe is increasingly moving to center stage, and Christian Gerlach's study has set new standards in this respect. Studies of individual units and forces, of concentration camps, ghettos and individual Jewish communities have extended and deepened our knowledge to an unprecedented extent. At the same time, certain regions have, for various reasons, received almost no attention thus far. Among them, for example, is the Ukraine, but most of all, Southeast Europe. In regard to Greece, for example, little more than vague ideas and a few local studies, e.g. on Thessaloniki, exist. The same is true for Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania. On the other hand, we are much better informed about Hungary since the publication of great studies by Randolph Braham and later by Aly and Gerlach.⁴⁷ On the whole, those regions in which the mass murders actually happened are finally being investigated.

Furthermore, Timothy Snyder's evocative study has raised a new, important question. Snyder pointed out that Stalinist mass crimes, especially the deliberate starvation of millions of Ukrainian peasants, took place in the same clearly definable region – the Baltic, Belarus, the Ukraine – as most of the Nazi mass crimes

⁴⁶ See the results produced by the historical commissions on the histories of Bundeskriminalamt and Bundesnachrichtendienst: Manfred Lohrmann (ed.), *Der Nationalsozialismus und die Geschichte des BKA. Spurensuche in eigener Sache*, Cologne 2011; Imanuel Baumann, *Schatten der Vergangenheit. Das BKA und seine Gründungsgeneration in der frühen Bundesrepublik*, Cologne 2011; *Die Geschichte der Organisation Gehlen und des BND 1945–1968. Umriss und Einblicke*, ed. by the Unabhängige Historikerkommission zur Erforschung der Geschichte des Bundesnachrichtendienstes, Marburg 2014.

⁴⁷ See Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide. The Holocaust in Hungary*, 2 vols., New York 1996; Christian Gerlach/Götz Aly, *Das letzte Kapitel. Realpolitik, Ideologie und der Mord an den ungarischen Juden 1944/1945*, Stuttgart 2002.

committed against Jews, Soviet prisoners of war, and civilian populations.⁴⁸ It seems to me that this debate has not yet come to an end. However, the discussion does not – as some have already assumed – point to the Holocaust as an “Asian deed” or as a putative act of German self-defense, as once described by Ernst Nolte. Rather, it has become apparent that both totalitarian dictatorships executed their policies of mass murder in the region between the West and the Russian core territory, a region that was not characterized by national state structures, but by ethnically mixed populations of poor and backward peasant farmers.

Second, the perspective of the victims has moved closer to center stage than it had been, with the exception of Israeli research, which was already doing this twenty or thirty years ago. For a long time, Holocaust studies were dominated by the perspectives of German bureaucrats. Even the best studies of the Holocaust lapsed into an antiseptic analysis of events, keeping them at a distance and avoiding closer descriptions, making them seem flat and monolithic. Subsequently, the search for the aims of the perpetrators, the political, economic, and ideological motives, vaulted over the actual crimes. The manifold suffering of the victims thus became a mere expression of a wider, somehow more important context. The objections raised against the testimonies of the victims, that they are too subjective, too mythical, or not reliable enough, have, at least since the debate between Saul Friedländer and Martin Broszat, turned out to be misguided and even absurd, especially when one considers that, for decades, the sources of the perpetrators were accepted as more authentic.⁴⁹ If one considers what the history of the Warsaw Ghetto would look like from the perspective of the German ghetto administration or the German police units serving as guards, this absurdity quickly becomes obvious, especially in light of studies by Andrea Löw and others. On the other hand, some studies as well as exhibitions have a tendency to reduce the life of Jews, even in the period *before* the war, to their victimhood and their endurance in the face of antisemitism and persecution. This is understandable if one wants to shed light on the path that led from tacit separation via marginalization to the first outbreak of hostility toward the Jews, continuing on to the stages of persecution, and finally to murder. Still, on the whole, this is a misleading portrayal that adopts certain elements of the conventionalized image of the Jew as the outright *other*. In this context, the biographical approach helps to avoid such exaggerations and tells life stories from within their societies – only

⁴⁸ See Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europa zwischen Hitler und Stalin*, Munich 2011.

⁴⁹ See Martin Broszat/Saul Friedländer, Um die “Historisierung des Nationalsozialismus.” Ein Briefwechsel, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 36 (1988), pp. 339–72.

then is it possible to avoid reducing individual lives to their share in the collective fate of the Jews.⁵⁰

Third, the connection between the Holocaust and other German mass crimes is increasingly coming into focus. Lest we forget: when the Soviet prisoners of war in Kaunas, who were originally tasked with construction work at the airfield, were dying from starvation in their barracks on the outskirts of the city, the cries of the starving were heard all over the city. Eventually, the shooting of the Jews in Kaunas was suspended and Jewish forced laborers were detached to repair the airport.⁵¹ The murder of the Jews in Eastern Europe took place in the midst of an inferno of violence against prisoners, against the Red Commissars, against “Gypsies” and partisans, as well as in the midst of the mass deaths of the starving inhabitants of Leningrad and other big cities.

And yet, we still know little about the Germans’ mass crimes that occurred during their retreat beginning in the summer of 1942. The enhanced focus on the various directions of German policies of mass murder changes our perspective on the so-called decision-making of October and November 1941. In the fall of 1941, the *Einsatzgruppen* were already shooting hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Soviet prisoners of war were dying in the *Wehrmacht*’s regular and temporary POW camps due to starvation measures. In Leningrad, as well as in many other regions of the East, the civilian population was purposefully starved, again resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths. In Poland and the Warthegau, the number of casualties in the ghettos was rising by the week. Overall, in the six months between June and December 1941, at least 1.4 million people in Poland and the Soviet Union were, in addition to combat-related casualties, killed by German units or starved to death. In light of this situation – and given the rapidly rising German casualties on the Eastern front, which were of particular significance to the German leadership – it was obviously no longer too great a leap to kill the Polish and Western European

50 See for example: J.G. Gaarlandt (ed.), *Das denkende Herz der Baracke. Die Tagebücher von ETTY HILLESUM 1941–1943*, Freiburg/Heidelberg 1983; Ruth Klüger, *Weiter leben. Eine Jugend*, Göttingen 1993; Victor Klemperer, *Ich will Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten. Tagebücher 1933–1945*, 2 vols., ed. by Walter Nowojski, Berlin 1995; Marcel Reich-Ranicki, *Mein Leben*, Stuttgart 1999; Helene Czapski-Holzman, “Dies Kind soll leben.” *Die Aufzeichnungen der Helene Holzman 1941–1944*, ed. by Reinhard Kaiser and Margarete Holzman, Frankfurt a.M. 2000; “Auch wenn ich hoffe“. *Das Tagebuch des Mosche Flinker*, Berlin 2008; H el ene Berr, *Pariser Tagebuch 1942–1944*, Munich 2009; Rutka Laskier, *Rutkas Tagebuch. Aufzeichnungen eines polnischen M adchens aus dem Getto*, Berlin 2011; Agnes Zsolt, *Das rote Fahrrad*, Vienna 2012; Marie Jalowicz Simon, *Untergetaucht. Eine junge Frau  uberlebt in Berlin 1940–1945*, Frankfurt a.M. 2014.

51 See Dieckmann, *Besatzungspolitik*, vol. 2, pp. 946–48.

Jews living in the areas of German control instead of deporting them to Siberian camps, as originally planned, in order to let them die there – but rather, to kill them immediately (perhaps one should say: to kill them immediately *as well*).⁵²

Fourth: the economic aspects. By now, significant studies of “Aryanization” have been published that shed light on this issue as it affected the territory of the German Reich and some of the countries occupied by Germany. The first studies for France and Belgium as well as for the Netherlands have appeared. In fact, the persecution and deportation of the Jews in these countries has been more intensely researched in recent years – for example, in studies by Dan Michman, Ahlrich Meyer, Insa Meinen and others, to name but a few.⁵³ The issue of Jewish forced labor has often been discussed, in which the hope, for example, of those Jews who lived in ghettos and believed that their value as labor would protect them from murder, proved deceptive. That these Jewish expectations, which relied on the Germans’ rationality and self-interest, were disappointed, has been described by Dan Diner as the core meaning of the term “rupture of civilization.”⁵⁴ We know little about the connection between the plundering of the Jews and their persecution and murder in Eastern Europe. However, in Germany as well as in Western and Eastern Europe, the motive for self-enrichment, for robbery, in the context of the persecution and murder of the Jews has moved much more into the foreground than it was fifteen or twenty years ago, and this includes, in addition to the Germans, various collaborationist governments and movements.⁵⁵ Here, extensive projects about the history of the Reich Ministries will provide further information. For the Ministry of Finance, a fairly detailed picture of the actions of German financial authorities in Poland and the Soviet Union will emerge, emphasizing how this aspect of self-enrichment as a motivation for persecution functioned in the state bureaucracy.

⁵² On this see Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte Deutschlands im 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich 2014, pp. 467–87.

⁵³ For Western Europe alone, see, for example, Dan Michman (ed.), *Belgium and the Holocaust. Jews, Belgians, Germans*, Jerusalem 1998; Ahlrich Meyer, *Die deutsche Besatzung in Frankreich. Widerstandsbekämpfung und Judenverfolgung*, Darmstadt 2000; idem, *Täter im Verhör. Die “Endlösung der Judenfrage” in Frankreich 1940–1944*, Darmstadt 2005; Michael Mayer, *Staaten als Täter. Ministerialbürokratie und “Judenpolitik” in NS-Deutschland und Vichy-Frankreich. Ein Vergleich*, Munich 2010; Insa Meinen, *Die Shoah in Belgien*, Darmstadt 2009; Insa Meinen/Ahlrich Meyer, *Verfolgt von Land zu Land. Jüdische Flüchtlinge in Westeuropa 1938–1944*, Paderborn 2013.

⁵⁴ Dan Diner (ed.), *Zivilisationsbruch. Denken nach Auschwitz*, Frankfurt a.M. 1988.

⁵⁵ See Christiane Kuller, *Bürokratie und Verbrechen. Antisemitische Finanzpolitik und Verwaltungspraxis im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland*, Munich 2013; Götz Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat. Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus*, Frankfurt a.M. 2005.

A *fifth point* concerns the role of the German people. In one regard, this refers to the question of what “ordinary Germans” knew about National Socialist mass crimes in the occupied territories – important works on this issue are already available with studies by Bankier, Pohl and Bajohr, Longerich and others, even though the scarce availability of primary sources makes such studies extremely difficult, producing results that are only approximate.⁵⁶ We have more and more detailed knowledge in regard to office holders at the middle levels, especially in Eastern European territories, providing insight into the quasi-colonial structures of the German occupation. It seems to me that the connection between the German Empire in the East and colonial policy are indeed striking and must be taken into greater consideration. In this context, the assertion of a direct road from Windhoek to Auschwitz has obscured rather than enhanced our comprehension. But the German campaign in the East cannot be understood without taking into consideration the continental-imperialist ambitions of both the political leadership and many ordinary Germans.⁵⁷

Most of all however, as a result of the rapidly growing debate regarding the concept of *Volksgemeinschaft*, historians have increasingly turned to an examination of the inner structures of German society, although until now the focus has been on the pre-war years and the results have not been overly impressive. In my opinion, the somewhat deadlocked debate over the *Volksgemeinschaft* as an academic “approach” or even a “concept” will ultimately be incorporated into the comparative study of racist societies in which the privileged are pitted against the racially or biologically excluded – even if the privileged are opposed to this principle of inequality or even to the regime as a whole.⁵⁸ It is of paramount importance to integrate the war years into this line of research, especially by analyzing

56 See David Bankier, *Die öffentliche Meinung im Hitler-Staat. Die “Endlösung” und die Deutschen. Eine Berichtigung*, Berlin 1995; Peter Longerich, “Davon haben wir nichts gewusst!” *Die Deutschen und die Judenverfolgung 1933–1945*, Munich 2006; Frank Bajohr/Dieter Pohl, *Der Holocaust als offenes Geheimnis. Die Deutschen, die NS-Führung und die Alliierten*, Munich 2006; idem, *Massenmord und schlechtes Gewissen. Die deutsche Bevölkerung, die NS-Führung und der Holocaust*, Frankfurt a.M. 2008.

57 See Jürgen Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust*, Berlin 2011.

58 See Frank Bajohr/Michael Wildt (eds.), *Volksgemeinschaft. Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus*, Frankfurt a.M. 2009; Michael Wildt, *Volksgemeinschaft als Selbstermächtigung. Gewalt gegen Juden in der deutschen Provinz 1919 bis 1939*, Hamburg 2007; Sven Keller, *Volksgemeinschaft am Ende. Gesellschaft und Gewalt 1944/45*, Munich 2013; Dietmar von Reeken (ed.), “Volksgemeinschaft” als soziale Praxis. *Neue Forschungen zur NS-Gesellschaft vor Ort*, Paderborn 2013; Bernd Stöver, *Volksgemeinschaft im Dritten Reich. Die Konsensbereitschaft der Deutschen aus der Sicht sozialistischer Exilberichte*, Düsseldorf 1993.

the German administration in the occupied territories. The studies that have been presented so far paint an unbelievable picture: infamy, malice, unprecedented brutality, humiliation of the victims in every conceivable form, sexual abuse on an unfathomable scale. And above all there was corruption, unjust enrichment, misappropriation, robbery of the victims, and the lifestyle of the colonial overlord as long as the situation at the front permitted it. Glubokoye is an example of this – the number of parcels sent to loved ones at home containing the possessions of the murdered was so high that the local German occupation administration was unable to handle the packages for the district commander and his staff members and started its own cardboard box production.

Sixth and finally: the history of the survivors. Each Jewish eyewitness report of the Holocaust conceals a special fate. For those who survived, extraordinary circumstances must have played a role. Testimony of these circumstances is contained in the stories of those who fled from the Germans and who endured endless escapes – from Vienna to Prague, from Prague to Paris, via the Pyrenees to Spain, from there to Lisbon, to Morocco, to London, to Boston, to Shanghai, always in mortal peril, always fearing denunciation, discovery, and capture. The story of those who were able to escape and find refuge, such as Marcel Reich-Ranicki, are full of coincidences and absurd developments.⁵⁹ The stories of those who joined the partisans or the resistance – and survived – also belong to this topic (which has not received adequate attention in Germany). There are also the stories of those who stood at the pits, waiting to be shot by the execution squads, but were only injured, who then fell into the pits, survived there covered by corpses and dirt, waited until the killing was over, and managed to free themselves, to find shelter, and to survive until the end of the war. Some fifty or a hundred such reports exist which, from a distance, almost seemed too horrible, too unlikely, like news from a distant hell – until we suddenly began to hear such stories again, from Bosnia, for example, and from Rwanda.

Finally, it must be emphasized that Holocaust research is not an academic field like any other. Certainly, the strict rules of academic research also apply to this subject. However, nobody working in this field can shake off the disturbing, horrible, shocking feeling one experiences while reading the primary sources and personal accounts. It is not easy to analyze precisely and coolly when a source provides information about the deportation of orphans or the last letters written by those about to be executed. It is therefore tempting to switch the focus to the cold world of the perpetrators, especially those sitting behind a desk, or to retreat

⁵⁹ Such as, for example, Jalowicz Simon, *Untergetaucht; Klüger, Weiter leben; Reich-Ranicki, Mein Leben*.

to studying the perception of the Holocaust in the decades following the end of the war – a field that has produced almost twice as many studies as research on the Holocaust itself.

Studying the Holocaust produces a picture that is both terrible and multifaceted, and which shows various impulses and motives: triviality, a lust to kill, racial hatred, and narrow-minded false morality on the side of the perpetrators; a lack of interest, indifference, shrugging or desperation among many bystanders; and on the side of the victims, all possible modes of behavior in this most extreme of all imaginable situations. As a matter of fact, this extraordinarily multifaceted story does not lend itself to being a compelling and effective metaphor for civic education. It is, in a matter of speaking, impossible to identify with, and as recent research has emphatically confirmed, the history of the murder of the Jews challenges enlightened thinking because it is impossible to explain the Holocaust with short formulas and simple, usable concepts or theories.

Let us finally turn to Glubokoye once more. In March 1943, Salman Fleischer, an inhabitant of the ghetto, had been accused of having purchased a piece of butter from a farmer, thus violating the strict prohibition on such purchases. Salman Fleischer was forewarned and was able to flee. As a consequence, the chief of police, a man by the name of Kern, had the first pedestrians coming along the ghetto's main street arrested and executed. These were Leiwe Driswjazki, Chawna Driswjazki and Lipa Landau. They were picked up by the Germans, tortured, and finally taken to Borki, where they were murdered. What do we know of these three people? Leiwe Driswjazki was an educated man, a mathematician, linguist, and teacher of the Talmud, a man well known and respected in Glubokoye. Several weeks earlier, his oldest son Owesi had already been taken to Borki during the course of an "operation" and had been killed there. Chawna was his youngest son, eighteen years old. He was walking in the street with his father when they were both arrested for the "crime" committed by Salman Fleischer. Lipa Landau, who was also a man with a university education, had already been sent to Borki once before; his wife and children were killed there, but he himself had only been injured, and miraculously he had survived. He had then wandered through the woods for some time until he had finally reached Glubokoye, where he met Leiwe Driswjazki and quickly became friends with him. The fate of people such as Salman Fleischer, Leiwe Driswjazki, Chawna Driswjazki and Lipa Landau stands at the center of Holocaust research. If we succeed in studying and explaining the fate of these men and women and their families as well as others who shared their fate – how it happened and who was responsible for it, locally and at headquarters – we will have achieved what is most important.

Peter Hayes

Holocaust Research

A Difficult Field in Transatlantic Perspective

Ulrich Herbert's fine overview of the development of scholarship on the Holocaust in Germany begins precisely where such an essay should: with an episode that undermines "the image of a cold, almost clinical, industrial mass murder that has shaped our view of the genocide of the Jews in past years." For most of its victims, as Herbert rightly insists, the massacre of the European Jews was "no secret occurrence known only to the initiated," and "no mechanized, sterile mass murder," but instead an "apocalyptic, downright archaic slaughter, carried out with the cooperation of all nearby German agencies, prepared and accompanied by almost every thinkable form of humiliation and torture, and characterized by scarcely comprehensible brutality and continuous, all encompassing corruption."

Bravo. For far too long inaccurate images of "factories of death" and an efficient, smoothly functioning bureaucracy of deportation have captivated historians and distracted their readers from the squalid and gory reality of the Holocaust. The expiration date on the argument of scholars such as Detlev Peukert and Zygmunt Baumann that the slaughter of the European Jews was an intrinsically "modern" event long since has passed, and the incident with which Herbert commences his account memorably reminds us of why.¹ In truth, the Holocaust was modern in neither inspiration nor execution. Just as the "racial science" that supposedly legitimated the killing came down to barnyard animal husbandry, the murdering resembled medieval freebooting more often than automated destruction. Nearly half the victims died in old-fashioned ways (from starvation, exposure, exhaustion, disease, wanton brutality, and shooting) in or near their places of residence. For those who were rounded up and deported, the trains seldom "ran on time" because they had no fixed schedules and the lowest priority in the railroad traffic of Nazi Europe. Thousands of people expired from heat, cold, thirst, suffocation, and despair in the stifling boxcars that meandered haltingly toward the gas chambers. The four camps that used carbon monoxide from truck or captured tank engines to snuff out some two million lives were ramshackle

¹ See Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cambridge 1989, and Detlev J.K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany. Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*, New Haven (CT)/London 1987.

affairs, simple to put up and to tear down when the time came, which is why few traces of them remain today. Even Auschwitz, the most “modern” of the asphyxiation sites after 1943, operated until then with improvised gas chambers in hastily made over buildings that lacked ventilation equipment and therefore could not be used in rapid succession. The Holocaust should not call to mind methodical and well-oiled machinery, but grisly pillaging and butchering in frenzied fits and starts.

Drawing our attention to this is hardly the only important analytical service that Professor Herbert’s historiographical survey performs. He appropriately flags the defects of the “structuralist” or “functionalist” account of the Third Reich’s march toward murder, especially the “ghost in the machine” quality of the argument that downplays the driving force of hate filled ideas and emphasizes intramural infighting instead. In a related vein, he shrewdly observes that historians’ debates about the motivation of perpetrators often served as an “avoidance discourse,” a form of engaging the Holocaust without looking at its bloody and bestial face. One might take these points a bit further, in fact, by asserting that much of the Holocaust historiography of the first forty to forty-five years after the murders ended was in effect – though not always in intent –exculpatory. Neither West German scholars nor most of their colleagues in allied countries could quite bear to relive the full horrors that Germans and their auxiliaries inflicted on the victims and so took refuge in somewhat antiseptic – though also necessary and ultimately clarifying –arguments about how policy got made. This had something to do with the general mistrust of survivor testimony that characterized the postwar decades, and it also reflected the occupational tendency of historians to work with the documents they have, which were primarily German ones.

Herbert strikes me as quite right to identify the 1990s as the key turning point in this and other respects. That decade brought this first generation of Holocaust discussion to an end by producing widespread consensus around June to December 1941 as the period when the Final Solution crystallized, stimulating a surge in regional studies and close examinations of concentration camps, opening up archives in the former Soviet block, engendering more sophisticated understandings of how to make historical use of survivors’ accounts, and returning the physical barbarity of German conduct to the fore.²

² The authoritative conclusion to the so-called dating game did not appear in English until a few years later; see Christopher R. Browning (with Jürgen Matthäus), *The Origins of the Final Solution. The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939 – March 1942*, Lincoln (NE)/Jerusalem 2004. But the outlines of Browning’s case had appeared in several of his earlier publications: *Fateful Months. Essays on the Emergence of the Final Solution*, New York 1991; *The Path to Geno-*

In addition, I admire Herbert's sensible and straightforward assessments of two interpretive issues concerning the dynamic behind the radicalization of the Holocaust in the German East. He maintains that Susanne Heim and Götz Aly advanced our knowledge by highlighting the relationship between murder and Nazi dreams of ethnic and "spatial" reordering, but also confused cause and effect. The Jews did not have to die because Nazi officials or planners kept finding new justifications for murder; the causal process ran the other way around. With regard to the recently burgeoning interest in the "colonial" dimension of German plans in the East, Herbert observes: "Imagining a direct line from Windhoek to Auschwitz has concealed more than it has revealed." Yes, indeed. What this line of thought most importantly has concealed is an answer to the question: "Why did *the Jews* have to die first and most completely?"³

Herbert is surely also correct to note that Holocaust research has become truly transnational since at least the turn of this century and therefore "one can no longer speak of *German* Holocaust research in its own right." In this sense, too, the 1990s marked a caesura. As it happens, the six aspects of development in the field that he sees predominating in the new millennium coincide fairly closely with research directions I have remarked upon.⁴ Because he has attended in connection with these, as with several issues raised earlier in his essay, primarily to works published in German (though not only by Germans), perhaps this is where a transatlantic perspective on the topics Herbert has discussed can be most useful. For a great deal of progress along his projected lines already has been made in English-language publications, especially quite recently, and an overview of the most significant contributions may provide a worthwhile expansion upon his essay for an Anglophone readership.

The first current line of development that Herbert highlights is the increasing importance of regional studies, especially of events in Eastern Europe. Since that is where the overwhelming majority of Jews perished, yet where researchers had least access to records after 1945 and least freedom to interpret them, increased work of this sort certainly is the chief desideratum of the field. Still, the continuing need should not obscure what has been achieved and published in English in

cide. *Essays on Launching the Final Solution*, Cambridge 1992, and *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers*, Cambridge 2000.

³ Carroll P. Kakek provides the American pendant to this colonial connection (with the same drawback) in *The American West and the Nazi East. A Comparative and Interpretive Perspective*, Basingstoke 2011, and *The Holocaust as Colonial Genocide: Hitler's "Indian Wars" in the "Wild East,"* New York 2013.

⁴ See Peter Hayes, *Holocaust Studies. Reflections and Predictions*. Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Annual Lecture, Washington 2014, pp. 9–11.

recent years. On the Soviet Union and Ukraine, numerous works of high quality have appeared.⁵ The situation is less good, but improving for the Baltic states.⁶ Both Hungary and Romania have been somewhat better served by scholarship than Herbert indicates.⁷ Mark Mazower's long chapter on the Holocaust in Greece has been around for a good deal of time, and even little Slovakia now has received thorough attention.⁸ Poland has been the setting for striking new work, not only on the situation in country, but also regarding the government-in-exile and its transfer of information about the Holocaust to Britain and the United States during the war.⁹ Finally, the case of Italy demonstrates how much we can and

5 For example, Karel C. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule*, Cambridge/MA 2004; Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine*, Chapel Hill 2005; Ray Brandon/Wendy Lower (eds.), *The Shoah in Ukraine. History, Testimony, Memorialization*, Bloomington/IN 2008; Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union*, Lincoln (NE)/Jerusalem 2009; Jeffrey Burds, *Holocaust in Rovno. The Massacre at Sosenki Forest, November 1941*, New York 2013; Michael David-Fox/Peter Holquist/Alexander M. Martin (eds.), *The Holocaust in the East. Local Perpetrators and Soviet Responses*, Pittsburgh 2014.

6 See the very moving and illuminating memoir by Modris Eksteins, *Walking Since Daybreak. A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Heart of our Century*, Boston/New York 1999, and Anton Weiss-Wendt, *Murder Without Hatred. Estonians and the Holocaust*, Syracuse/NY 2009. Of course, the most formidable recent work on this region is Christoph Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944*, 2 vols., Göttingen 2011, which Herbert cites and which deserves, despite the enormous costs probably involved, translation into English.

7 On Hungary, we now have the exhaustive account of Randolph L. Braham, *The Geographical Encyclopedia of the Holocaust in Hungary*, 3 vols., Evanston/IL 2013, and Zoltan Vagi et al. (eds.), *The Holocaust in Hungary. Evolution of a Genocide*, Lanham/MD 2013. On Romania, three excellent accounts are Radu Ioanid, *The Holocaust in Romania. The Destruction of Jews and Gypsies under the Antonescu Regime, 1940–1944*, Chicago 2000; Jean Ancel, *The Economic Destruction of Romanian Jewry*, Jerusalem 2007, and Jean Ancel, *The History of the Holocaust in Romania*, Lincoln (NE)/Jerusalem 2011. Also illuminating are two recent studies of territorial and population changes involving the two countries: Holly Case, *Between States. The Transylvanian Question and the European Idea during World War II*, Stanford/CA 2009, and Vladimir Solonari, *Purifying the Nation. Population Exchange and Ethnic Cleansing in Nazi-Allied Romania*, Baltimore/MD 2010.

8 See Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece. The Experience of Occupation 1941–44*, New Haven/CT 1993, pp. 235–61, and James Mace Ward, *Priest, Politician, Collaborator. Jozef Tiso and the Making of Fascist Slovakia*, Ithaca/NY 2013.

9 See Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews. Betrayal and Murder in German-Occupied Poland*, Bloomington/IN 2013; David Silberklang, *Gates of Tears: The Holocaust in the Lublin District*, Jerusalem 2013; Joshua D. Zimmerman (ed.), *Contested Memories. Poles and Jews during the Holocaust and its Aftermath*, New Brunswick/NJ 2003; Joshua D. Zimmerman, *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945*, New York 2015, and Michael Fleming, *Auschwitz, the Allies and the Censorship of the Holocaust*, Cambridge 2014.

still have to learn from regional studies of even a country whose archives long have been accessible.¹⁰

The second currently prevailing trend in Holocaust research that Herbert mentions is increasing attention to the viewpoint of the victims. In this connection he cites a sampling of the rich memoir literature, which is valuable, but for obvious reasons, not going to grow much further. Where the scholarly literature in English has made marked advances is in opening up access to new sources on a large scale. These run from ghetto chronicles to diaries to clandestinely written histories to compilations of all these sorts of materials and more in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's multi-volume "Jewish Responses to Persecution" Series.¹¹ In addition, researchers have presented probing studies of an individual Jewish communities under duress, of the *stetlach* in the Polish-Soviet borderland, of efforts to preserve a record of the persecution from the perspective of the Warsaw ghetto inhabitants, and of a Jewish administrator faced with the dilemmas of responding to the German deportation of Jews from the Netherlands.¹²

Herbert sees the connection between the Holocaust and other mass murders by Germans also coming more sharply into focus and identifies this as a third current direction in the field. Certainly scholars increasingly recognize that the Holocaust occurred amidst an "inferno of violence" that made the elision of policy into mass murder between June and December of 1941 seem unremark-

10 See Joshua D. Zimmerman (ed.), *Jews in Italy under Fascist and Nazi Rule, 1922–1945*, New York 2005; Michele Sarfatti, *The Jews in Mussolini's Italy. From Equality to Persecution*, Madison/WI 2006, and Michael A. Livingston, *The Fascists and the Jews of Italy. Mussolini's Race Laws, 1938–1943*, Cambridge 2014.

11 See Herman Kruk (ed.), *The Last Days of the Jerusalem of Lithuania. Chronicles from the Vilna Ghetto and the Camps, 1939–1944*, New Haven/CT 2002; Wendy Lower (ed.), *The Diary of Samuel Golfard and the Holocaust in Galicia*, Lanham/MD 2011; David Koker, *At the Edge of the Abyss. A Concentration Camp Diary, 1943–1944*, ed. by Robert Jan van Pelt, Evanston/IL 2012; *The Clandestine History of the Kovno Jewish Ghetto Police*, ed. by Samuel Schalkowsky, Bloomington/IN 2014; Jürgen Matthäus/Mark Roseman (eds.), *Jewish Responses to Persecution*, vol. I: 1933–1938, Lanham/MD 2010; Alexandra Garbarini et al. (eds.), *Jewish Responses to Persecution*, vol. II: 1938–1940, Lanham/MD 2011; Jürgen Matthäus et al. (eds.), *Jewish Responses to Persecution*, vol. III: 1941–1942, Lanham/MD 2013; Emil Kerenji (ed.), *Jewish Responses to Persecution*, vol. IV: 1942–1943, Lanham/MD 2015.

12 See Abraham Ascher, *A Community under Siege: The Jews of Breslau under Nazism*, Stanford/CA 2007; J.A.S. Grenville, *The Jews and Germans in Hamburg. The Destruction of a Civilization 1790–1945*, London/New York 2012; Sara Bender, *The Jews of Bialystok during World War II and the Holocaust*, Lebanon/NH 2008; Yehuda Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl*, New Haven (CT)/London 2009; Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History? Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabes Archive*, Bloomington/IN 2007; Bernard Wasserstein, *The Ambiguity of Virtue. Gertrude van Tijn and the Fate of the Dutch Jews*, Cambridge (MA)/London 2014.

able. Timothy Snyder's brilliant "Bloodlands" has been, as Herbert rightly says, a field-changing work in this respect, and the multiplying studies of events in Ukraine and Lithuania noted above have heightened awareness of the cauldron of ethnic animosities that fed the Holocaust.¹³ So have two recent and revealing studies by doctoral students of Christopher Browning.¹⁴ Yet, one should add that the study of the so-called other victims of the Holocaust seems rather to have stalled since the turn of the century, with little new being discovered about the treatment of Sinti and Roma or the disabled or gay people.¹⁵

The fourth developing aspect of the field that Herbert notes is the rising salience of the Holocaust's economic dimension. Probably because this is the area in which I have worked most intensively, this seems to me the least informative segment of Herbert's survey and the one most in need of expansion with reference not only to recent works in English, but to some of the classic works in German that he does not mention. That the only work he cites on this topic is the problematic book by Christiane Kuller on the German Finance Ministry is particularly unfortunate.¹⁶ Far more apposite among works in German about the dispossession of Jews in Germany are those of Christoph Kreutzmüller, Götz Aly and Michael Sontheimer, Frank Bajohr, and Avraham Barkai.¹⁷ Aly overshot the mark elsewhere in stating the importance of plunder, including from Jews, to the German war effort, but he did not exaggerate the importance of redistribution

13 See also Timothy Snyder's latest, but less compelling, contribution: *Black Earth. The Holocaust as History and Warning*, New York 2015.

14 See Waitman Wade Beorn, *Marching into Darkness. The Wehrmacht and the Holocaust in Belarus*, Cambridge/MA 2014, and Eric C. Steinhart, *The Holocaust and the Germanization of Ukraine*, New York 2015.

15 Two partial exceptions to this stagnation are Anton Weiss-Wendt, *The Nazi Genocide of the Roma. Reassessment and Commemoration*, New York/Oxford 2013, and Günter Morsch/Bertrand Perz (eds.), *Neue Studien zu nationalsozialistischen Massentötungen durch Giftgas. Historische Bedeutung, technische Entwicklung, revisionistische Leugnung*, Berlin 2011.

16 See my detailed critique: *Hitler's Clever Kleptocrats: The Ministry of Finance in Nazi Germany*, in: *Neue Politische Literatur* 58 (2013), pp. 201–08.

17 See Christoph Kreutzmüller, *Ausverkauf. Die Vernichtung der jüdischen Gewerbetätigkeit in Berlin 1930–1945*, Berlin 2012 (*Final Sale in Berlin. The Destruction of Jewish Commercial Activity 1930–1945*, New York 2015); Götz Aly/Michael Sontheimer, *Fromms. Wie der jüdische Kondomfabrikant Julius F. unter die deutschen Räuber fiel*, Frankfurt a.M. 2007 (*Fromm's. How Julius Fromm's Condom Empire Fell to the Nazis*, New York 2009); Frank Bajohr, "Aryanisation" in Hamburg. *Die Verdrängung der jüdischen Unternehmer 1933–1945*, Hamburg 1997 ("Aryanisation" in Hamburg. *The Economic Exclusion of Jews and the Confiscation of their Property in Nazi Germany*, New York 2002); Avraham Barkai, *Vom Boykott zur "Entjudung."* *Der wirtschaftliche Existenzkampf der Juden im Dritten Reich 1933–1943*, Frankfurt a.M. 1987 (*From Boycott to Annihilation. The Economic Struggle of German Jews 1933–1943*, Hanover/NH 1989).

of Jews' property to sustaining morale in Germany and winning popularity in the occupied East.¹⁸ For the process of pillaging on a continental scale, the fundamental work is that of Martin Dean.¹⁹ On forced and slave labor, a subject on which Ulrich Herbert published a masterful book, both German and American scholars recently have made notable contributions that impart a nuanced understanding of the ideological and economic impulses that propelled the system.²⁰ These and other works have refuted the widespread misconception that the use of slave labor began and continued because it was highly profitable to the enterprises involved. That was frequently not the case.²¹

Herbert's fifth characteristic aspect of Holocaust research today is a growing attention to what the German population knew and thought about the persecution and murders. Although the English-language additions to this literature are fewer than to several of the other rubrics Herbert lists, three quite significant contributions come to mind: Peter Fritzsche's insightful recreation of how everyday Germans tried to and did "become Nazis" after 1933; Alan Steinweis' revealing work on popular participation, especially in Hessen, during the pogrom of 1938; and Mary Fulbrook's careful examination of the career of a mid-level civil servant in occupied Poland.²² In addition, numerous recent studies of German corporations during the Nazi regime, several of them published in both German and English, throw interesting light on this elusive and murky topic.²³ That literature also serves as a bridge to another dimension of this issue not explicitly mentioned

18 See Götz Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat. Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus*, Frankfurt a.M. 2005 (*Hitler's Beneficiaries. Plunder, Race War and the Nazi Welfare State*, New York 2006).

19 See Martin Dean, *Robbing the Jews. The Confiscation of Jewish Property in the Holocaust, 1933–1945*, New York 2008.

20 See Mark Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit unter dem Hakenkreuz. Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene und Häftlinge im Deutschen Reich und im besetzten Europa 1939–1945*, Stuttgart/Munich 2001; Michael Thad Allen, *The Business of Genocide. The SS, Slave Labor, and the Concentration Camps*, Chapel Hill/NC 2002; Wolf Gruner, *Jewish Forced Labor under the Nazis. Economic Needs and Racial Aims, 1938–1944*, New York 2006.

21 See especially Adam Tooze, *The Wages of Destruction. The Making and Breaking of the Nazi Economy*, London 2006, pp. 534–37, and Peter Hayes, *From Cooperation to Complicity. Degussa in the Third Reich*, New York 2004, pp. 262–64.

22 See Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, Cambridge/MA 2008; Alan E. Steinweis, *Kristallnacht 1938*, Cambridge/MA 2009, and Mary Fulbrook, *A Small Town Near Auschwitz. Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust*, Oxford 2012. See also Eric A. Johnson/Karl-Heinz Reuband, *What We Knew. Terror, Mass Murder, and Everyday Life in Nazi Germany. An Oral History*, London 2005.

23 Especially illuminating is Stephan H. Lindner, *Hoehchst: Ein I.G. Farben Werk im Dritten Reich*, Munich 2005 (*Inside IG Farben. Hoechst During the Third Reich*, New York 2008). See also, Hayes, *From Cooperation to Complicity*.

by Herbert, the question of Germans' intellectual or professional complicity, about which numerous excellent studies have appeared since 2000.²⁴

The sixth and final facet of the subject that Herbert finds gaining increased attention is the history of survivors, as indicated by the memoirs he cites. In this respect, the English-language literature has grown almost exponentially since the turn of the century, as has been the case with the related subject of rescue and rescuers.²⁵ Another interesting and moving expression of this trend is the appearance in English of at least two remarkable and affecting books by descendants of the persecuted: Göran Rosenberg's searing recollection of the descent of his father, who had outlived Lodz, Auschwitz, and the death marches, into suicide; and Edmund de Waal's beautiful portrait of his ancestral family through the passage of a few small Japanese carvings from generation to generation.²⁶ Surely, however, the largest body of literature touching on this subject in recent years has been that concerning restitution. Germans have been the principal contributors on this subject, notably Constantin Goschler and Jürgen Lillteicher.²⁷

24 For example, see Ingo Haar/Michael Fahlbusch (eds.), *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing, 1919–1945*, New York/Oxford 2005; Steven P. Remy, *The Heidelberg Myth. The Nazification and Denazification of a German University*, Cambridge/MA 2002; Robert A. Krieg, *Catholic Theologians in Nazi Germany*, New York 2004; Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus. Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany*, Princeton/NJ 2008; Robert P. Erickson, *Complicity in the Holocaust. Churches and Universities in Nazi Germany*, New York 2012; Yvonne Sherratt, *Hitler's Philosophers*, New Haven/CT 2013.

25 On the survivors who flocked, ironically, to Germany after 1945, see Ruth Gay, *Safe Among the Germans. Liberated Jews After World War II*, New Haven/CT 2002; Zeev W. Mankowitz, *Life Between Memory and Hope. The Survivors of the Holocaust in Occupied Germany*, Cambridge 2002; Jay Howard Geller, *Jews in Post-Holocaust Germany, 1945–1953*, Cambridge 2005; Atina Grossmann, *Jews, Germans, and Allies. Close Encounters in Occupied Germany*, Princeton/NJ 2007. On the forces that drove so many to that country, Jan T. Gross, *Fear. Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz. An Essay in Historical Interpretation*, New York 2006. On the reception of refugees who got to Israel, the pioneering work is Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million. The Israelis and the Holocaust*, New York 1993. On those who got to the United States, see Beth B. Cohen, *Case Closed. Holocaust Survivors in Postwar America*, New Brunswick/NJ 2007. A strong study that combines the topics of rescue and survival is Bob Moore, *Survivors. Jewish Self-Help and Rescue in Nazi-Occupied Western Europe*, Oxford 2010. The literature on rescuers is now voluminous. Two recent and valuable examples are Michael Good, *The Search for Major Plagge. The Nazi who saved Jews*, New York 2005, and Paul A. Levine, *Raoul Wallenberg in Budapest. Myth, History and Holocaust*, London/Portland (OR) 2010.

26 See Göran Rosenberg, *A Brief Stop on the Road from Auschwitz*, London 2014, and Edmund de Waal, *The Hare with Amber Eyes. A Hidden Inheritance*, New York 2011.

27 See Jürgen Lillteicher, *Raub, Recht und Restitution. Die Rückerstattung jüdischen Eigentums in der frühen Bundesrepublik*, Göttingen 2007; Constantin Goschler, *Schuld und Schulden. Die Politik der Wiedergutmachung für NS-Verfolgte seit 1945*, Berlin 2005; Constantin Goschler

But publications in English, some scholarly and some popular, also have provided noteworthy accounts, especially of American legal proceedings.²⁸

English-language scholarship also contains a good deal of value added on two subjects that Herbert treats at length, so much value that his discussions warrant expansion to include it. The first of these topics is *Täterforschung*, the study of perpetrators, in which scholars based in the United States have made important recent advances. Martin Dean pioneered the study of local collaborators in the occupied East; Edward Westermann showed that most of the *Ordnungspolizei* sent there to hunt down Jews were not “ordinary men,” but people who saw themselves as “political soldiers”; Thomas Kühne provided a powerful account of the role of “community” in generating genocide; and most recently Wendy Lower has exposed the role of German women in the killing fields.²⁹ I also would argue that at least two people whose work has appeared in German deserve prominent mention in Herbert’s footnote 37 regarding perpetrators. Harald Welzer’s social psychological analysis of the creation and enactment of “a specific National Socialist morality” is an indispensable text, as is Sara Berger’s quite different, extremely detailed account of the T4 personnel who went on to staff the Operation Reinhard death camps.³⁰ More understandable is Herbert’s omission of references to most of the recent biographical treatments of perpetrators, since they do not add a great deal to our knowledge.³¹ But two conspicuous exceptions to this pattern are David Cesarani’s and Bettina Stangneth’s studies of Adolf Eichmann,

(ed.), *Die Entschädigung von NS-Zwangsarbeit am Anfang des 21. Jahrhunderts*, 4 vols., Göttingen 2012.

28 In addition to Martin Dean/Constantin Gochler/Philipp Ther (eds.), *Robbery and Restitution. The Conflict over Jewish Property in Europe*, New York/Oxford 2007, see Michael J. Bazylar, *Holocaust Justice. The Battle for Restitution in America’s Courts*, New York/London 2003; Michael J. Bazylar/Roger P. Alford (eds.), *Holocaust Restitution. Perspectives on the Litigation and Its Legacy*, New York/London 2006; Michael R. Marrus, *Some Measure of Justice. The Holocaust Era Restitution Campaign of the 1990s*, Madison/WI 2009; Anne-Marie O’Connor, *The Lady in Gold. The Extraordinary Tale of Gustav Klimt’s Masterpiece, Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*, New York 2012.

29 See Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust. Crimes of the Local Police in Belorussia and Ukraine, 1941–44*, New York 2000; Edward B. Westermann, *Hitler’s Police Battalions. Enforcing Racial War in the East*, Lawrence/KS 2005; Thomas Kühne, *Belonging and Genocide. Hitler’s Community, 1918–1945*, New Haven (CT)/London 2010; Wendy Lower, *Hitler’s Furies. German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields*, Boston 2013.

30 See Harald Welzer, *Täter. Wie aus ganz normalen Menschen Massenmörder werden*, Frankfurt a.M. 2006; Sara Berger, *Experten der Vernichtung: Das T4-Reinhardt Netzwerk in den Lagern Belzec, Sobibor und Treblinka*, Hamburg 2013.

31 E.g., Robert Gerwarth, *Hitler’s Hangman. The Life of Heydrich*, New Haven (CT)/London 2011, and Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler*, Oxford 2012.

which decisively put paid to the myth of him as a dutiful clerk who personified the “banality of evil.”³²

The second topic on which the English literature has expanded so remarkably as to need specific mention is the study of the concentration camps. Recent books have told the story of Jews in the prewar camps, provided new and thorough histories of at least four of the most significant ones, detailed the death marches from them and their liberation, and included a magisterial survey of the entire camp system.³³ Though the research findings of these works have not been transformational, they have added considerable depth and specificity to the state of knowledge.

Two other significant “aspects” of the development of Holocaust research on this side of the Atlantic may be worth highlighting, as they illustrate the increasingly “transnational” focus of Holocaust studies to which Professor Herbert alluded. The first, the subject of “onlookers,” people or entities or countries perceived, both then and now, as failing to do what they could to impede the Holocaust, seems to be of greater interest nowadays to Anglo-American historians than to German ones. In consequence, the principal German contributions to this discussion have concerned the behavior of the Vatican.³⁴ But even on that subject, the volume of publication in English is a good deal larger than in German and generally more critical.³⁵ Germans have played a greater recent role in setting

32 See David Cesarani, *Becoming Eichmann. Rethinking the Life, Crimes, and Trial of a “Desk Murderer,”* New York 2004, and Bettina Stangneth, *Eichmann vor Jerusalem. Das unbehelligte Leben eines Massenmörders,* Zürich/Hamburg 2011 (*Eichmann Before Jerusalem. The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer,* New York 2014).

33 See Kim Wünschmann, *Before Auschwitz. Jewish Prisoners in the Prewar Concentration Camps,* Cambridge (MA)/London 2015; Laurence Rees, *Auschwitz. A New History,* New York 2005; Jules Schelvis, *Sobibor. A History of a Nazi Death Camp,* New York 2007; Patrick Montague, *Chełmno and the Holocaust. The History of Hitler’s First Death Camp,* London/New York 2012; Sarah Helm, *Ravensbrück. Life and Death in Hitler’s Concentration Camp for Women,* New York 2014; Dan Stone, *The Liberation of the Camps. The End of the Holocaust and its Aftermath,* New Haven(CT)/London 2015; Daniel Blatman, *The Death Marches. The Final Phase of Nazi Genocide,* Cambridge (MA)/London 2011; Nikolaus Wachsmann, *KL. A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps,* New York 2015.

34 Two very different recent examples are Hubert Wolf, *Papst und Teufel. Die Archive des Vatikans und das Dritte Reich,* Munich 2008 (*Pope and Devil. The Vatican’s Archives and the Third Reich,* Cambridge, MA/London 2010), and Klaus Kühlwein, *Warum der Papst schwieg. Pius XII. und der Holocaust,* Düsseldorf 2008.

35 David Kertzer and Michael Phayer have been the leading English-language critics. See David I. Kertzer, *The Popes Against the Jews. The Vatican’s Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism,* New York 2001, and David I. Kertzer, *The Pope and Mussolini. The Secret History of Pius XI and the Rise of Fascism in Europe,* New York 2014; Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holo-*

a significant new subfield in motion, the study of the relationship between the Holocaust and the Muslim world. Two significant advances were the works of Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüppers and of Corry Guttstadt, both of which later appeared in English.³⁶ But Jeffrey Herf was not far behind; Frank Nicosia has updated his earlier research on the topic; and fresh perspectives have come from Gilbert Achcar and David Motadel.³⁷

Finally, by way of expanding on Herbert's survey, I should refer to one other "aspect" of contemporary work that I think illustrates the prevailing transnationality in still a different sense: the burgeoning literature on postwar punishment. Two recent volumes that intensively reexamine the postwar Nuremberg "successor" trials before American military tribunals contain contributions from American, British, Canadian, French, and German participants.³⁸ Among them are Daniel Bloxham and Lawrence Douglas, who have made major contributions to the study of war crimes trials, and several of the former doctoral students of Michael Marrus, who have written highly informative books on specific NMT (Nuremberg Military Tribunals) cases.³⁹ No fewer than five excellent books

caust, 1930–1965, Bloomington/IN 2000; Michael Phayer, *Pius XII, the Holocaust, and the Cold War*, Bloomington/IN 2008. See also the rather understated book by Peter Godman, *Hitler and the Vatican. Inside the Secret Archives That Reveal the New Story of the Nazis and the Church*, New York 2004, and the theologically informed Jacques Kornberg, *The Pope's Dilemma. Pius XII Faces Atrocities and Genocide in the Second World War*, Toronto 2015.

36 See Klaus-Michael Mallmann/Martin Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz. Das Dritte Reich, die Araber und Palästina*, Darmstadt 2006 (*Nazi Palestine. The Plans for the Extermination of the Jews in Palestine*, New York 2010); Corry Guttstadt, *Die Türkei, die Juden und der Holocaust*, Berlin/Hamburg 2008 (*Turkey, the Jews, and the Holocaust*, New York 2013).

37 See Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy. Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust*, Cambridge/MA 2006; Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World*, New Haven/CT 2009; Francis R. Nicosia, *Nazi Germany and the Arab World*, New York 2015; Gilbert Achcar, *The Arabs and the Holocaust. The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives*, New York 2009; David Motadel, *Islam and Nazi Germany's War*, Cambridge/MA 2014.

38 See Kim C. Priemel/Alexa Stiller (eds.), *NMT. Die Nürnberger Militärtribunale zwischen Geschichte, Gerechtigkeit und Rechtschöpfung*, Hamburg 2013, the contents of which overlap with a shorter volume in English under the title: *Reassessing the Nuremberg Military Tribunals. Transitional Justice, Trial Narratives, and Historiography*, New York/Oxford 2012.

39 See Donald Bloxham, *Genocide on Trial. War Crimes Trials and the Formation of Holocaust History and Memory*, New York 2001; Lawrence Douglas, *The Memory of Judgment. Making Law and History in the Trials of the Holocaust*, New Haven (CT)/London 2001; Hilary Earl, *The Nuremberg SS-Einsatzgruppen Trial, 1945–1958. Atrocity, Law, and History*, Cambridge 2009; Valerie Geneviève Hébert, *Hitler's Generals on Trial. The Last War Crimes Tribunal at Nuremberg*, Lawrence/KS 2010; Tomaz Jardim, *The Mauthausen Trial. American Military Justice in Germany*, Cambridge (MA)/London 2012.

on the trials of concentration camp and sanatoria personnel have appeared in recent years.⁴⁰ Law professors have joined in the discussion from very differently enlightening perspectives.⁴¹

Beyond expanding on Professor Herbert's points, I wish to conclude by expressing my reservations about two of his observations. My first concern arises in connection with his discussion of the inability of western Europeans after World War II to perceive the distinctness of the assault on the Jews. This does not seem to me to have been just a result of the fact that western armies did not liberate the death camps; after all, little was left for even the Soviets to see at Treblinka, Sobibor, and Belzec. Still less was this a consequence of the poor and inconsistent information that Herbert says westerners had about the murders during wartime. Rather the reticence or blindness reflected a general, collective, and self-serving interest in refusing to retribute property or to hand over Jewish orphans to their community or to confront the degree to which western populations had tolerated the deportations – a pervasive attitude to which Henri Rousso gave the name “the Vichy syndrome.”⁴² The stance was also a residue of the sort of antisemitism that prevented Britain and the U.S. from focusing on the ample information the Polish government in exile had provided them during the war on the extent and principal locations of the massacre or from making the Holocaust a centerpiece of anti-Nazi propaganda.⁴³

I also have to dissent from Professor Herbert's rather rosy view of the decline in Germany of apologetics regarding the Nazi era in the aftermath of the *Wehrmachtsausstellung*. Having been on the receiving end of a great deal of special pleading and excuse-making on behalf of German diplomats who were complicit in the crimes of the Nazi regime and adept at covering up their and their colleagues roles after World War II, I am not so sanguine. After the Independent His-

40 See Patricia Heberer/Jürgen Matthäus, *Atrocities on Trial. Historical Perspectives on the Politics of Prosecuting War Crimes*, Lincoln/NE 2008; Michael S. Bryant, *Confronting the “Good Death.” Nazi Euthanasia on Trial, 1945–1953*, Boulder/CO 2005; Michael S. Bryant, *Eyewitness to Genocide. The Operation Reinhard Death Camp Trials, 1955–1966*, Knoxville/TN 2014; Rebecca Wittmann, *Beyond Justice. The Auschwitz Trial*, Cambridge (MA)/London 2005; Devin O. Pendas, *The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963–1965. Genocide, History, and the Limits of the Law*, New York 2006.

41 See Stephan Landsman, *Crimes of the Holocaust. The Law Confronts Hard Cases*, Philadelphia 2005, and Michael J. Bazylar/Frank M. Tuerkheimer, *Forgotten Trials of the Holocaust*, New York/London 2014.

42 Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe since 1945*, London 2005, pp. 808–10.

43 See Michael Fleming's book cited in note 9, and Shlomo Aronson, *Hitler, the Allies, and the Jews*, New York 2004.

torians Commission of which I was a member published *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit. Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik* in 2010, German Foreign Office veterans who called themselves *Mumien*, the novelist and lawyer Bernhard Schlink, and the historian Daniel Koerfer mounted outraged, often highly personal attacks on the motives and judgments of the authors. The common line of reproach is that we had failed to empathize with the complexity of the diplomats' situation under the Nazi dictatorship and presumed to moralize about rather than to explain away their actions. As Ulrich Herbert himself wrote in response to this bleating, *Solche Töne haben wir in Deutschland lange nicht mehr gehört* ("We have not heard such sounds in Germany for a very long time).⁴⁴ I like to think that such sounds are growing fainter in Germany, but I doubt that we have heard the last of them.

⁴⁴ For the furious responses, see Bernhard Schlink, Die Kultur des Denunziatorischen, in: Merkur 65 (2011), pp. 473–86; Daniel Koerfer, Diplomatenjagd. Joschka Fischer, seine Unabhängige Historikerkommission und Das Amt, Potsdam 2013, and the examples provided in Martin Sabrow/Christian Mentel (eds.), Das Auswärtige Amt und seine umstrittene Vergangenheit. Eine deutsche Debatte, Frankfurt a.M. 2014, a balanced collection of commentaries on the Commission's work, where Herbert's remark appears on p. 218.

Hans Rothfels

Kurt Gerstein's Eyewitness Report on Mass Gassings

Editor's Foreword

The source document published here is a German version of the main text of a document originally written largely in French (PS-1553-RF-350) that was submitted to the International Military Tribunal.¹ This document was subsequently admitted as evidence for the prosecution in the "Doctors' Trial" (Exhib. 428). Afterwards, the main factual sections were read in German translation at the first session of the Military Tribunal in Nuremberg on 16 January 1947 and recorded in the minutes.² Other portions of this document, especially the enclosed hydrogen cyanide invoices as well as the name of the person who recorded the main transcript and that of the addressee of the invoices, mining assessor (former) Kurt Gerstein, also played a significant role in the first German poison gas trial (Degesch Trial) in Frankfurt in January 1949.³

The following is not meant to be a "revelation," rather, the intention is to make a document that has hitherto only been used for trial purposes available to the public and for historical research by publishing a critical edition with a scholarly commentary. This seems all the more necessary given the fact that, in many respects, Gerstein's text presents a quite unique eyewitness account of the mass gassings.

1 Cited in *Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof. Nürnberg 14. November 1945 – 1. Oktober 1946*, vol. VI, Nuremberg 1947, pp. 370–71, 400–01, 467. Two invoices (see below) are printed in *Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof. Nürnberg 14. November 1945 – 1. Oktober 1946*, vol. XXVII, Nuremberg 1948, pp. 341–42. – PS 1553 was used by the French prosecution (therefore RF 350). – The editor is in possession of a photocopy of the individual pages. – Plus a handwritten draft of the French text on 10 folio pages.

2 Institut für Zeitgeschichte, MB 15/3, Military Tribunal No. 1, Trial against Karl Brandt et al. (Medical Case), 16 January 1947, pp. 1806–15. See also the excerpt in *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10*, vol. I, Nuremberg 1949, pp. 865–70. – Likewise, an excerpt of the original French version, only polished a bit, is reprinted in Léon Poliakov, *Bréviaire de la Haine. Le III^e Reich et les Juifs*, Paris 1951, pp. 221–24.

3 See *Neue Zeitung*, 22 March 1949, p. 5.

Dealing with these atrocious events is not pleasant. They are not being recounted here in order to plant the seeds of hate or keep them alive, but rather as part of this journal's self-professed obligation, as stated in its first issue, "that it will not skirt around controversial issues, be it international or national, and leave room for legends to take hold." The best place to start living up to this duty is naturally on our own doorstep. Despite the degree to which the rationalization of inhumane and subhuman acts was a specific feature of the National Socialist regime, and the degree to which the systematization of mass extermination as well as the presumptuous decision about what makes someone "worthy of living" was a particularity of this regime, we cannot ignore the merciless shadow that this has cast over our era and its latent potential as a whole. Time and time again, we have seen just how thin the veil of civilization over the dark powers below has become in other places as well. We have seen what happens if these powers are released when the bonds holding them unravel. If we were to try to forget or trivialize these experiences, which we witnessed most emphatically in the Nazi period, we would not only be exhibiting apathy and unscrupulousness towards the victims of this very period, but also this would signify the lapse of our vigilance and conscience once and for all. From this perspective, the Gerstein report is part of "contemporary history" in the truest sense of the word.

* * *

A number of preliminary technical questions had to be taken into consideration in preparing this edition. In terms of its scope and nature, the document PS-1553 does not seem suitable for publication in its full length without further commentary, despite the fact that it aptly reflects the psychological situation as it was in early 1945. It begins with a short, typed English report of an American advance "field team" that came upon Gerstein in a hotel that had been seized in Rottweil on 5 May 1945. The report contains general remarks made by G. (Gerstein) about his close relationship to Pastor Niemöller, his advisory position with respect to the gassings, and his willingness to testify as an eyewitness. The interrogators (Major D.C. Evans and Mr. J.W. Haught) do not come to any particular conclusions, apart from questioning "whether Dr. Gerstein should be granted protection against local Nazis." This initial report is followed by the "summary" typically included in Nuremberg documents. The next text, the core report, is a statement by Gerstein in French regarding his biography, his political activities and his experiences. It is dated Rottweil, 26 April 1945 and noted that it was handed over to the Americans on 5 May. The original French text covers 6 typed pages that end with a formulaic statement in which G. declares himself willing to swear by oath and signed with his full name. A one-sided, typed "supplement" follows

that lists the names of a number of anti-Nazis who had been to his apartment in Berlin W 35, Bülowstr. 47 I as well as the names of 11 references from the circles of the Confessing Church. Another page, handwritten in French and personally signed with information on the hydrogen cyanide deliveries, is also attached. Two handwritten and personally signed pages follow, written in very clumsy and poor English and likewise dated 26 April 1945; on these pages, G. describes what he saw that only 4 or 5 others had seen “and these others were Nazis.” In his concluding remarks, he asks that his report be kept from publication until it was clear whether Niemöller (who had been deported from Dachau) was dead or had been liberated. Twelve original invoices from the Degesch company for hydrogen cyanide delivered to Auschwitz and Oranienburg (between 14 February and 31 May 1944) follow, addressed to *Obersturmführer* Kurt Gerstein, plus a letter from Degesch likewise addressed to him and dated 9 June 1944. The last two pages contain a typewritten summary of the deliveries with dates and amounts.

The weakness of the document described above does not lie in the disparity of its contents or its form, but rather in the fact that G. was apparently not able to express all that he really wanted to say in his report in French. Furthermore, the German translation (reverse translation?) submitted in the Doctors' Trial is full of mistakes. However, even an accurate translation would not eliminate all the ambiguities. Therefore, it is quite fortunate that a parallel German version of the main French document of PS-1553 has been discovered. It is dated Rottweil, 4 May 1945, which was the day before the American interrogation. According to Mrs. Gerstein, her husband had left the copy for her at Hotel Mohren in Rottweil, but she did not retrieve it until over a year later because she had not been aware of the fact that it had been deposited there beforehand.⁴ Indisputably, this parallel version has certain formal disadvantages compared to the French text. For one thing, it is dated a few days later, but this really should not make much difference.⁵ A more sizable objection seems to be that the German version is typed (on 24 quartos – also with a handwritten supplement) and unsigned. Yet, when closely compared, it becomes immediately clear that the author of the signed and partially handwritten French text must be the author of the German text. In terms

⁴ Statement by Mrs. G., 13 December 1952.

⁵ Given the lack of fluency in the French text, it can hardly be assumed that it is truly the original text (although a handwritten draft has been found), i.e. that it was written without a preliminary German draft. The considerable differences in locution and structure rule out the possibility of a common (lost) original for both texts. Rather, it can be assumed that G. had often repeated his account orally (which has also been confirmed, see below) or even in writing beforehand. The 24 quarto pages of the German text are accompanied by 10 likewise typewritten pages with “supplements,” but these pages only contain hearsay information.

of the actual facts, the two are by and large identical. The commentary added to the document reprinted here often refers to a spot-check comparison. It is also quite obvious that the German copy – even without regard to its linguistic precision – is generally (if not always) clearer as well as more detailed, which only a very personal knowledge of the matter could have afforded. Moreover, it appears to be closer to the reality of the events thanks to its use of peculiar diction and the fact that it seems to be less influenced by considerations about the desired impact on its intended audience. In the main part, it sticks closer to what really could have been observed in person. In particular, it lacks the generalized and heavily exaggerated estimate of the total number of victims that was added in the French text.⁶ Thus, for a variety of reasons, the parallel German version of the text should generally take precedence. There is no doubt about its authenticity, nor about the *subjective* desire to be accurate and truthful expressed throughout.

* * *

At the same time, however, the question of its *objective* credibility cannot be brushed aside. This question applies in particular to the eyewitness report and the other direct statements. Everything else (apart from the autobiography) has not been reprinted here or otherwise relegated to the commentary. The information reported on the basis of hearsay might be important (for Auschwitz, for example), but the real value of the document lies in its description of the events in Belzec and thereafter. The question remains, however, whether it was even possible for G. to make observations on the scale he maintains and whether these observations are internally credible. With regards to the first point, the autobiography (along with the supporting documents, to which we will return later) leaves no doubt that the author of the report had close contact to the things described and that it was his determined desire to act as an observer that paved the way for him to do so in such an unusual manner.

The psychological questions that arise from this must be sidelined for the time being. The autobiographical details (apart from the official papers), which

⁶ G. estimates here 25 million (“not only Jews, but also mainly Poles and Czechs”). Although this must be rejected as an enormous exaggeration, this should not give rise to the sentiment that it “wasn’t all that bad.” Oddly enough, such voices are filtering over here from Switzerland (see Basler Nachrichten, 12 June 1946; Der Turmwart, December 1950). According to these sources, the number of murdered (religious) Jews could “only” have amounted to 1.5 million. From the National Socialist side, however, a figure of 6 million has been admitted (IMT-Dokument 2738-PS). Investigations out of London and New York indicate a figure between 5.5 and 5.7 million. Report by Dr. H. Heffter, Research Center for the History of Hamburg from 1933–1945.

in and of themselves possess a kind of documentary significance, are indispensable when it comes to these questions. Moreover, they offer information that helps confirm the internal credibility of the report. This information is dealt with in the commentary on the first two sections of the document. The results of this credibility test can be summarized as follows: the available evidence completely confirms the core of the statements (religious propaganda, twice in protective custody, dismissal from the party) and the early party membership (May 1933) is willingly admitted, but G. tends to overtax his memory when it comes to the accuracy of certain details (e.g. 2 October instead of 15 October; 14 October instead of 23 July).

Such a critical perspective must also be applied to the main section of the report. Was it even possible to accurately observe the events in such a heated moment? Was it even logistically possible (200 Ukrainians, approx. 100 chairs, 12-13 lashes)? Is it possible to remember such specifics? It must be clear that not every word can be taken at face value and that it is entirely possible that there are mistakes or inaccuracies in terms of the incidentals (as well as in the autobiographical information). Nonetheless, even a more critical reader will succumb to the impression that everything that could be directly seen, heard or smelled left a true and indelible mark on the sensory apparatus of a sharply attuned observer.

Furthermore, other evidence exists that corroborates the details of the main report. As Belzec was only in operation until December 1942 and – according to Polish investigations – 600,000 people were killed there,⁷ Gerstein's estimated theoretical "maximum" of 15,000 per day in August 1942 seems entirely plausible. Other documents confirm the existence of the Jewish labor battalions of Police Captain Wirth that otherwise seem to be such a psychological mystery.⁸ The same holds true for the process that "replayed like a film every time," the hypocritical remarks by Wirth (or one of his representatives), the "bath house," the "cloak room," the constant pushing so that everything ran "as if on an assembly line," and the amount of collected valuables.⁹ But, above all, what G. said about his trip

⁷ See Poliakov, *Bréviaire*, p. 224.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 225. – In Sobibor and Treblinka, there were revolts within these special detachments (*Sonderkommandos*). – See also the testimony of Dr. Morgen (*Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof. Nürnberg 14. November 1945 – 1. Oktober 1946*, vol. XX, Nuremberg 1948, pp. 537–41), who Wirth proudly told of his "method" and his "ploy" that resulted in over 5,000 Jews taking part in the destruction of the Jews and the collection of effects in the four camps under his command. – The information about "4 camps" and Morgen's observation that Wirth himself only had "three or four people" with him confirm the accuracy of Gerstein's report.

⁹ *Ibid.*, according to Wirth's own words and Morgen's observations.

back from Warsaw and the exact information that he claims to have given to von Otter from the Swedish embassy can be corroborated. He told the understandably skeptical diplomat that the then superintendent-general D. Otto Dibelius could vouch for his credibility. D. Dibelius¹⁰ not only confirmed that he was convinced of Gerstein's "political and personal reliability," but also that he had "first heard more detailed information" about the gassing methods from him. He also remembered that "a few days" after the train conversation, Mr. von Otter had told him about "the talk with Gerstein from his point of view." The Bishop of Berlin continued: "Thus I was in a position to be able to confirm that what Gerstein had said, at least in terms of his Swedish acquaintanceship, was absolutely true. The same can also be said about his actual report."

The historian, bound by his methods, cannot go quite so far in his conclusions, but indisputably, this witness and his verification of the matter weigh heavily alongside the other corroborating evidence. Taking all this into consideration, one can say that the objective credibility of the Gerstein report can be assumed on the whole. Its shocking details, which provide a framework for the even more ghastly facts that one is reluctant to believe, clearly cannot be attributed to the observer himself, but rather the events themselves and the actors involved.

* * *

The favorable opinion of Bishop Dibelius with regards to Gerstein's personal and political character is reaffirmed by countless others. A number of the references provided in the PS-1553 file and in the German version have been questioned or testified to in the Frankfurt trial. The well-known Catholic chaplain Buchholz, who stood by the victims of the 20th July plot as the prison chaplain, was one of them. There is also no lack of statements regarding Gerstein's rather unusual and strange personal history as well as his character (e.g. Pastor Niemöller and

10 The following according to a letter from the Protestant Bishop of Berlin to the Institut für Zeitgeschichte Munich dated 22 November 1952. – Likewise, a letter from the Swedish Foreign Ministry (10 November 1949) addressed to the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris confirms that at the end of August 1942 on a train coming from Warsaw, G. passed along the intelligence in question to von Otter, a member of the Swedish embassy in Berlin, which was then forwarded to the Foreign Office. An enclosed record log (London, 7 August 1945) corresponds in its details entirely with G.'s report on Belzec and also names D. Dibelius' reference. The motive stressed here is that G. was convinced that if what he had observed became known to the rest of the world and the German people, the latter would bring an end to the regime.

Pastor Rehling).¹¹ The president of the Bundestag, Dr. Ehlers, who had known G. since the early 1930s through their work in the Association of German Bible Circles, referred to him as “an out of the ordinary person,” always willing “to take risks”..., “to pursue certain goals which he perceived to be right.”¹² As one might say: one of those people “on the border” prompted into action by the “borderline situation” of our time. When viewed from this perspective, Gerstein’s biography also seems to have a documentary quality in terms of contemporary history. But, a few preliminary remarks are still necessary.

First of all, there is no doubt that Gerstein was, despite his early party membership, a dedicated, ethical-religious opponent of the Nazis’ church and racial policies and that he worked against them, both secretly and openly, for which he was then beaten and imprisoned. “He stepped in to stop an SA-leader who had abused 18 young men.”¹³ In addition to the biographical facts verified by documents, evidence also confirms: “extensive and extremely risky aid for Martin Niemöller when he was imprisoned in Dachau, large-scale smuggling of food into the concentration camps to the benefit of the inmates...”¹⁴ All those who consulted with Gerstein about moral matters agree on his inner disposition. For this reason, his membership in the SS, as well as the rather conspicuous fact that he was accepted into its elite ranks despite his expulsion from the party, raises some doubts. The civilian tribunal in Tübingen responsible for his case took offense at the apparent attempt to justify a “complete inner transformation.”¹⁵ It questioned the motives that Gerstein himself had given to explain why he joined the *Waffen-SS* and, at any rate, it found that it could not be “proved” that his intentions “from the very beginning” were to spy upon and sabotage the SS. However, the most emphatic testimonies contradict this. The very precise statement given by church councilor O. Wehr from Saarbrücken, which is cited in the footnotes to the document, must be noted in this context. The hospital pastor G. Werner

11 Quoted in the civilian tribunal judgment, Tübingen, 17 August 1950; ratified 11 October 1950. File ref.: N 3451.

12 Cited in a letter from Dr. Ehlers addressed to Dr. Krausnick, 12 July 1952.

13 Trial tribunal judgment, as cited in note 11.

14 From the report of the N. Z. on the hearing of evidence in the Degesch trial.

15 As cited above. – References were made back to a complaint submitted by Gerstein against his expulsion from the party (in fact, the supreme party tribunal changed its sentence on 22 June to a dismissal) and to a letter addressed to his father, dated 9 October 1938, in which G. professes, “to serve the deeds of Adolf Hitler with all his might and his life.” Indeed, according to a note filed at the Brown House in 1940, he supposedly confirmed that he had “become a radical supporter of the Confessing Church.” – The tribunal apparently failed to consider that such a strident exaggeration might strip this statement of its value.

from Tübingen also describes Gerstein's resolution "to observe and prevent the worst, without regard for himself, with dogged determination."¹⁶ And the Dutchman J.H. Ubbink from Doesburg, a colleague who Gerstein visited a number of times during his SS training in Arnhem and who was one of his channels for transmitting his observations to the outside, testified that later, when he asked G. why had become an officer, he received the answer that in this capacity, "I would have many more opportunities to undermine the system from within."¹⁷ Apparently, Gerstein was successfully able to disguise himself completely. Indeed, it appears that he was able to impress two of his Gestapo instructors with his religious "idealism," and the supreme party tribunal likewise granted this "conscientious delinquent" a measure of sympathy.¹⁸ Perhaps they detected a similar vein of fanaticism that might prove to be useful at some point. "With his utterly unusual talents and skills," church councilor Wehr claimed, "it had not been difficult for G. to get where he wanted to go."¹⁹ In particular, he apparently put his engineering and medical knowledge to good use. He was able to rise through the ranks quickly into the Reich leadership of the SS and the department of *Gesundheitstechnik* (Health Engineering).

In light of all of the above, Gerstein seems to represent an exemplary case of "joining in to prevent something worse" – a well-known phenomenon that, at least here, has presented its very best face rather than appearing in its average – and often only very average – form. Today, it must surely be acknowledged that the SS was not merely a "black corps." It is quite interesting and it speaks for G. that despite his fiercest accusations against some, he was also willing to testify that some individuals, and even some within his professional milieu, were opposed to what was happening.²⁰ This predicament manifests itself in Gerstein himself at its extreme. He wanted to take part in order to be able to look into the very darkest corners and to report what he saw to his friends in the church and abroad. Evidence proves that he did both. He lived in the hope (or under the illusion) that the dissemination of this knowledge outside the country could put a stop to this liquidation. But, simultaneously, he was pulled into the very heart of this criminal apparatus.

16 Tübingen, 7 March 1949.

17 Cited in the Trial tribunal judgment (see above).

18 The transformation of his expulsion from the party into merely a dismissal (22 June 1939) was granted on the basis that the defendant had acted out of religious conviction and therefore he should not be accused of "consciously culpable and therefore punishable conduct"! On the other hand – and this is also interesting – he was said to have shown to the contrary recently that "he puts other commitments above his obligations to the party."

19 On the statements by church councilor O. Wehr, see also note 35.

20 See note 61 below.

The extent to which he actively took part in these horrific actions as a result of this situation cannot be determined. Gerstein himself only admitted to participating in an advisory capacity and repeatedly emphasized that he had “clean hands.”²¹ The civilian tribunal²² maintained that he should be seen as an “important link in the chain” among those responsible. One could have expected, the court continued, that “after his experiences in the Belzec camp, he would have done everything he could in order to prevent himself from becoming a henchman for this organized mass murder... and that he could have found other ways and means to keep himself out of the action.” Following the appeal procedure,²³ the same tribunal declared that he had not acted under extreme duress. “Even if one acknowledges,” the judgment reads, “that it would not have been easy for the accused to disassociate himself from the SS because of the dangerous knowledge he possessed, the tribunal is still convinced that he would not have been in direct mortal danger if he had refrained from carrying out the commissions with which he was tasked.”

This is not the place to take issue with the judgments of the tribunal. But, the idea that someone who knew so much could just somehow “leave” without fearing for his life seems to be quite incompatible with the reality of the situation. The question also remains unanswered as to whether Gerstein did indeed withdraw by and large from these commissions or somehow managed to sabotage them. This brings up the point of the hydrogen cyanide invoices so often cited. The fact that he rendered two deliveries unusable was acknowledged by the civilian tribunal.²⁴ What still has not been taken into account at all is the fact that Gerstein himself presented the 12 invoices that he could have made disappear without any problems. It goes without question that this speaks volumes in favor of the reasons that he himself cites for having taking up the position that he did. Furthermore, the letter addressed to him from Degesch dated 9 June 1944 contains clear indications that he sought to find arguments for the poor shelf life of the chemicals in order to justify either their immediate use for disinfection purposes or their disposal. Indubitably, all of this points to acts of sabotage undertaken at great risk. But, it remains just as certain that these actions could not have changed the entire course of events and that G. remained a prisoner of the path

21 He writes in a letter addressed to his father (Autumn 1944): “I have kept my hands from having anything to do with all of this. When – and as soon as – I have received such orders, I did not carry them out and I kept them from being carried out ...”

22 As cited above.

23 Judgment of the tribunal (composed of the same members) dated 16 November 1950. – Ratified: 2 January 1951. File ref. no.: N 3451.

24 In the judgement dated 17 August 1950.

that he had quite consciously chosen. According to the American interrogation report, he was first able to detach himself three weeks before the collapse of the regime.

Gerstein was then held under a kind of house arrest by the French occupational government and had permission “to go back and forth between Tübingen and Rottweil.”²⁵ Then he was taken to a prison in Paris. He committed suicide on 25 July 1945 in the Prison Militaire de Paris.²⁶ He was never able to have the last word about his own experiences.

Rather, at the end of these introductory remarks and before the document itself follows, perhaps the words used by church councilor O. Wehr to summarize his knowledge of Kurt Gerstein and these events are quite fitting:

“A figure like Kurt Gerstein has to be seen in two lights, or better said, in the clear light of civilian standards of judgment. Indeed, he must seem to be nothing less than unbelievable. The very uncanny mastery with which he disguised his innermost Christian existence through an external habitus put on for show for no other purpose than to help baffles all normal standards. I have plenty of examples to demonstrate his mastery when it came to disguising his real desires. All moral political-psychological attempts to come to a judgment of this man worthy of his innermost being and desires will never bear fruit. On the basis of our pastoral discussions with each other, for which he expressly sought me out, I have never doubted the constancy of his inner being.”

H[ans] R[othfels]

Tübingen/Württemberg, Gartenstr. 24
currently in Rottweil, 4 May 1945

Biography of²⁷ Kurt *Gerstein*, mining assessor (former), graduate engineer, dismissed from the Prussian Mining Authority on 27 September 1936 because of subversive activity.²⁸

²⁵ According to the American interrogation report.

²⁶ In the death certificate later sent to his widow, it reads: “La mort est due à la pendaison. Cette manière de se donner la mort ne put absolument pas être évitée dans un prison.” In a letter sent by the delegate in France to the Commission Oecumenique pour l’Aide Spirituelle aux Prisonniers de Guerre, Genf, to Mrs. Gerstein on 10 March 1949, it was noted, among others, that: “unfortunately, despite several efforts, it was not possible to learn anything more about the death of your husband and the site of his grave could not be identified.”

²⁷ The information provided in both of the following sections is more detailed than in the French text dated 26 April 1945, but it is otherwise generally consistent.

²⁸ Documentary evidence – seen in the original – verifies the arrest warrant dated 26 September 1936 (Saarbrücken-B Nr. 5748/36-IIA2-2199/36). In conjunction with his arrest (on the date above),

Born on 11 August 1905 in Münster/Westphalia. Co-owner of the machinery factory De Limon Fluhme & Co. in Düsseldorf, Industriestr. 1–17, specialists in automatic lubricating systems for locomotives as well as Knorr and Westinghouse brakes.²⁹ ...

2. Curriculum Vitae: 1905–1910 in Münster/Westphalia. 1910–1919 Saarbrücken. 1919 to 1921 Halberstadt, 1921–1925 Neuruppin near Berlin. 1925 *Abitur* at the local humanistic *Gymnasium*. Studies: University of Marburg/Lahn 1925–1927. Berlin 1927 to 1931, Technical University of Aachen 1927. Certified Engineers' Exam 1931 in Berlin-Charlottenburg. Active member of the Protestant youth organization (CVJM – YMCA) and the university bible circles since 1925.

Political Activity: Active supporter of Brüning and Stresemann. – Under Gestapo investigation since June 1933 because of Christian activity against the Nazi state. – Joined the NSDAP on 2 May 1933, expelled from the NSDAP on 2 October 1936³⁰ because of subversive (religious) activity on behalf of the Confessing Church. Simultaneously dismissed from the upper civil service.³¹ – Publicly beaten and injured on 30 January 1935 for disrupting a party dedication celebration in the city theater of Hagen/Westphalia during the performance of a “Wittekind” play – Passed the mining assessor examination at the Ministry of the Economy in Berlin with distinction on 27 November 1935. Civil servant in the Saar Mines Administration in Saarbrücken until arrested on 27 September 1936. This first arrest was prompted by the dissemination of 8,500 subversive (anti-Nazi) brochures to all the ministerial department heads and upper judicial civil servants in Germany.³² – As I had always wanted, I then studied medicine in Tübingen at the Deutsches Institut für Ärztliche Mission (German Institute for Medical Mission). I was able to pursue this thanks to my independent financial means. As an owner of the company De Limon Fluhme & Co. in Düsseldorf, I earned an average annual income of 18,000 Reichsmarks. I usually spent about one third of my income to support my religious ideals. In particular, I had about 230,000

he would have been suspended from his post. The official dismissal from the civil service did not take place until 9 February 1937 (signed Oberberghauptmann Schlattmann. Gesch.Z.G 313/15).

29 Additional information only pertaining to his family follows.

30 The expulsion was carried out by interim order on 15 October 1936, as noted in the judgment of the Supreme Party Tribunal (Munich, 22 June 1939. Gesch. Nr. I/332/39).

31 See note 28.

32 The Supreme Party Tribunal (note 30) was aware that 4 different brochures issued by the Confessing Church had been sent to 380 upper judicial civil servants in summer 1938. The president of the German *Bundestag*, Dr. Hermann Ehlers, testified (as cited above), that some of these brochures were “circulated in print runs of more than 100,000.” – According to the French text, he was imprisoned until the end of October.

religious and anti-Nazi brochures printed and distributed to interested parties at my own expense.³³

I was arrested for the second time on 14 July 1938 for subversive activity and brought to the Welzheim concentration camp.³⁴ I had often been warned and interrogated by the Gestapo prior to this and I was officially banned from public speaking in all of the Reich.

When I heard that the killing of the mentally ill had begun in Grafeneck and Hadamar and elsewhere, I decided that I would at least try to get a look inside these ovens and chambers in order to find out what was happening there. I became even more committed to this mission after my sister-in-law by marriage, Bertha Ebeling, was put to death in Hadamar.³⁵ With two letters of reference from the Gestapo officials who were responsible for my case,³⁶ it was not difficult for me to join the SS. These men were of the opinion that my idealism, which they quite admired, had to be harnessed for the Nazi cause. – I joined the SS on 10 March 1941. I completed my basic training in Hamburg-Langehoorn, Arnhem (Holland) and Oranienburg. While I was in Holland, I immediately got in touch with the Dutch resistance movement (graduate engineer Ubbink, Doesburg). Given my dual university degrees, I was soon assigned to the medical engineering unit and the *SS Führungshauptamt* (Leadership Main Office), Departmental Group D Sanitation Service of the *Waffen-SS*, Hygiene Department. I completed my medical training with a group of 40 physicians. – In the hygiene department, I was allowed to choose what I wanted to do. I constructed mobile and stationary disinfection systems for the troops, prisoner-of-war camps, and concentration camps. I was quite successful in these

33 “Par poste” (by mail) is the term used in the French text.

34 The (second) arrest warrant is dated 23 July 1938 (original on raspberry red paper. Geh. Staatspolizeiamt Berlin SW. B Nr. II D Haft-Nr. W 2171. Signed Dr. Best) – Arrival at Welzheim confirmed by an attached white slip of paper. – According to the French text, he was held there until 28 August.

35 This fact and its context are confirmed by church councilor O. Wehr, authorized representative of the Protestant Church of the Rhine Province in Saarland, who testified to having buried the urn of the daughter of the late Pastor Ebeling who had been gassed in Hadamar himself. He added that, at the time, “he (Gerstein) told me of his resolution to find out whether the rumors spreading about these and other criminal acts were true. He deflected my very strong objections to this plan to head into the camp of these diabolical powers with ardent determination.” (Testimony of church councilor O. Wehr, Saarbrücken, 24 January 1948. Tgb. Nr. 138/49. Copy certified by the Protestant Superior Church Council, Office in Tübingen. 31 Jan. 1949. Signed Haisch.) – In the French text, the “voir, voir” is typed spaced out for emphasis; otherwise the information in this section is more accurate in the German text.

36 One of the two appears to have been *Kriminalsekretär* Zerrer in Stuttgart, who supposedly gave G.’s religious texts to his own son and proved to be of help G.

endeavors, if not undeservedly, and I was considered to be some kind of technical genius from then on out. At the very least, we were actually able to bring the horrible typhus epidemic that hit the camps in 1941 under control. Due to my continued success, I was made a lieutenant and then a senior lieutenant. – At Christmastime in 1941, the court that had ordered my expulsion from the NSDAP learned that I had joined the upper ranks of the SS. A malicious attack was launched against me. But, because of my great success and my character, I was protected and retained by my department. In January 1942, I became the head of the department of health engineering and was also appointed to the same sector in the Reich Physicians' SS and Police. At this post, I took over responsibility for the entire technical disinfection unit, including disinfection with highly poisonous gases.

In this capacity, I received a visit on 8 June 1942 from *SS-Sturmführer* Günther³⁷ from the *Reichsicherheitshauptamt* (Reich Security Main Office), Berlin W, Kurfürstenstraße who was unknown to me at the time. Günther came in civilian clothes. He commissioned me with the task of acquiring 100 kg of hydrogen cyanide for a top secret government mission and delivering them by car to an unknown location that would only be known to the driver. A few weeks later, we then drove to Prague. I had an inkling about what kind of mission this was, but I took it on nonetheless because it finally gave me a chance, quite incidentally, to look into these matters as I had longed to do so for some time. Also, given that I was quite the expert authority on hydrogen cyanide, I thought it would be easy for me to declare the hydrogen cyanide as unfit under some sort of pretense – because it had degraded or something along those lines – and prevent it from actually being used for killing purposes. Professor Dr. med. Pfannenstiel, *SS-Obersturmbannführer*, Professor of Hygiene at the University of Marburg/Lahn – coincidentally – rode with us.³⁸

We then drove to Lublin where *SS-Gruppenführer* Globocnek [sic] awaited us.³⁹ In the factory in Collin, I purposely implied that the acid was intended to be

37 In reference to G., see *Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof. Nürnberg 14. November 1945 – 1. Oktober 1946*, vol. IV, Nuremberg 1947, p. 102, and IMT, XX, p. 249.

38 This coincidence was confirmed by Prof. Pfannenstiel in his interrogation in I.G. Farben Trial (Interrogation Nr. 2288). Moreover, his testimony confirms other details of the eyewitness report – despite certain inner contradictions. As the focus here is on the events and not on the people, addition information about P. at the end of the report has been left out.

39 Odilo Globocnik, *Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer* (Senior SS and Police Leader), was an Austrian National Socialist from Kärnten and had made a name for himself during the *Anschluss* as the Gauleiter of Vienna. He committed suicide in 1945. He was mentioned several times during the main Nuremberg trials. – Gerstein writes Globocnek.

used to kill people. Almost immediately, a person appeared that afternoon who seemed to be very interested in our vehicle, but he fled quickly as soon as he was noticed. Globocnek said: This entire affair is one of the most secret matters that exist at the moment, one could even say it is the most secret. Anyone who spreads the word about it will be shot on the spot. Just yesterday, two tattlers were shot. Then he explained to us the following:

At the moment – that was as of 17 August 1942 – we have three facilities in operation, namely

1. *Belzec* on the country road and train track Lublin-Lemberg (Lvov) where it intersects with the line of demarcation with Russia. Maximum of 15,000 people per day.
2. *Treblinka*, 120 kilometers to the northeast of Warsaw. Maximum of 25,000 people per day.
3. *Sobibor*, also somewhere in Poland, but I do not know exactly where.⁴⁰ Maximum of 20,000 people per day.
4. – then under construction – *Majdanek* near Lublin.

I personally inspected Belzec, Treblinka and Majdanek closely together with the head of these facilities, *Polizeihauptmann* Wirth.⁴¹

Globocnek took me aside and said: It is your job, in particular, to disinfect the immense quantities of textile materials. The entire collection of textile materials was only done in order to account for where all the clothing for the eastern workers, etc. came from and to portray it as the fruit of the sacrifice made by the German people. In reality, the quantities coming from our facilities are 10 to 20 times that of these textile collections.⁴²

(I then discussed the options for disinfecting such quantities of textiles – we are talking about a growing stockpile over 40 million kilograms, equal to 60 full cargo train compartments – at the existing laundries and disinfection facilities with the most efficient companies. But it was impossible to find someone who could take on such large contracts. I cleverly used all of these negotiations in order to tell or imply that Jews were being killed. In the end, Globocnek was satis-

⁴⁰ Approximately 80 km south of Brest.

⁴¹ On Wirth, see notes 8 and 9. – See also *Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof. Nürnberg* 14. November 1945 – 1. Oktober 1946, vol. XLII, Nuremberg 1949, p. 563. Wirth is described by Dr. Morgen as a *Kriminalkommissar* from Stuttgart. He was shot in partisan combat.

⁴² The purpose is more clearly stated in the French text: “pour obscurcir la provenance des vêtements juif, Polonais, Tchèques etc.” The following paragraph is missing. It is a handwritten addition in the German text.

fied if all the stuff was sprayed with some Detenolin (?) so that it would at least smell like disinfectant. This is then what was done.)

Your other much more important task is to convert our gas chambers, which currently use diesel exhaust gases, to work with something better and faster. I am thinking primarily about hydrogen cyanide. The *Führer*⁴³ and Himmler were here yesterday. As they commanded, I must take you there personally and I am not to issue written permits or entry passes to anyone. –

Pfannenstiel then asked: “What else did the *Führer* say?” – Glob.: Faster, the whole action needs to be done faster. His companion, *Ministerialrat* Dr. Herbert Lindner,⁴⁴ then asked: Mr. Globocnek, do you think it is good and proper to bury all the corpses rather than cremating them? A generation might come after us that doesn't understand the whole thing! –

Globocnek answered: Gentlemen, if ever a generation were to come after us that was so flabby and weak at the knees that it could not understand our mighty task then the whole National Socialist project will have been in vain. To the contrary, I think that we should put bronze placards over the graves that would bear witness to the fact that we were courageous enough to carry out such a massive and necessary undertaking.

The *Führer* answered: Good, Globocnek, I quite agree with you!

In the end, the other viewpoint prevailed. The corpses were put on large racks, improvised out of train tracks, and cremated with the help of gasoline and diesel oil.⁴⁵

On the following day, we drove to Belzec. A small special railroad station had been constructed for this purpose on a hill straight north of the country road Lublin–Lemberg (Lvov) on the left corner of the demarcation line. To the south of the road, there were a few houses bearing the inscription *Sonderkommando Belzec der Waffen-SS*. As the actual commandant of the entire killing center, *Polizeihauptmann* Wirth, had not yet arrived, Globocnek introduced me to *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Obermeyer (from Pirmasens).⁴⁶ That afternoon, he only let me see

43 According to the information provided by his military entourage at the time, Hitler had not left his headquarters at this time.

44 The prosecutors in the “Doctors’ Trial” have already corrected the name to Linden. This refers to *Ministerialrat* Dr. Herbert Linden from the Reich Ministry of the Interior, who had been in charge of the execution of the Euthanasia program since 1939 in his capacity as the head of the *Gemeinnützige Transportgesellschaft*; in *Taschenbuch für Verwaltungsbeamte*, Berlin 1942 p. 13, Dr. L. appears as *Ministerialrat* and Advisor in Department IV (*Gesundheitswesen und Volkspflege*) of the Reich Ministry of the Interior.

45 This sentence is located at the end of the actual eyewitness report in the French text.

46 The name “Obermeyer” is not referred to in the IMT trials.

what he really had to show me. I did not see any dead bodies that day, but the whole area smelled like pestilence in the hot August weather and there were millions of flies milling about.

– Right near the small, two-track railroad station, there was a large barrack, the so-called cloak room, with a large counter for valuables. It was followed by a room with about 100 chairs, the haircutting room. Then came a small avenue lined by birch trees with double barbed wire fences on the left and right bearing the inscriptions: To the inhalation and bathing rooms! – There was a kind of bath house with geraniums in front of us, then a small set of stairs and then 3 rooms to the right and to the left measuring 5x5 meters,⁴⁷ 1.90 meters high, outfitted with wooden doors like garages. On the back wall, almost invisible in the dark, there were large wooden ramp doors. As a “fitting little joke,” there was a Star of David on the roof!! – An inscription in front of the building read: Heckenholt-Founda-tion! – I was not able to see anything else that afternoon.

The next morning, shortly before 7am, I was told: the first transport will arrive in ten minutes!⁴⁸ – After a few minutes, the first train from Lemberg (Lvov) actually arrived. 45 cars with 6,700 people, 1,450 of whom were already dead upon arrival. Horribly pale and fearful children looked out through the barred hatches, their eyes filled with mortal fear, and men and women behind them. The train approached: 200 Ukrainians ripped open the doors and used their leather whips to drive the people out of the cars. Further instructions blared over a large speaker: remove all your clothes, including prostheses, glasses, etc. Deposit valuables at the counter without a voucher or receipt. Carefully tie shoes together (for the textile collection), because no one would ever be able to find the matching shoes again in the pile that was at least 25 meters high. Then the women and girls were to go to the haircutter, who then cut off all their hair with just two or three scissor snips and stashed it in potato sacks. “That is for some kind of special purpose on the submarines, for seals or something like that!” was what the *SS-Unterscharführer* on duty there told me. –

Then the line begins to move. At the head there was a girl – pretty as a picture – they all walk along the avenue, all naked, men, women, children, without prostheses. I myself stood alongside Captain Wirth at the top of the ramp between the two chambers. Mothers with babies on their breasts, they walk up, hesitate, enter the death chambers! – A strong SS man stands on the corner who says to those poor souls in a pastoral voice: nothing is going to happen to you! You just

⁴⁷ In the French document: 4x5 mètres. But the later (matching) cubic meter calculations indicate that 5x5 was meant.

⁴⁸ According to IMT, XX, p. 427, the action began in August 1942!

have to inhale deeply in the chambers, it will open your lungs, you need to inhale this because of all the illnesses and diseases. When asked what would happen to them, he answered: Yes, of course, the men will have to work, building houses and streets, but the women won't need to work. Only if they want to, they can help with the housework or the cooking. – For some of the poor souls, this small ray of hope is enough to get them take the few steps to the chambers without resisting in any way – the majority knows, the smell tells them of their fate! – And so they climb up the small set of stairs and then they see everything. Mothers with children held to their breasts, small naked children, adults, men and women, all naked – they hesitate, but they walk into the death chambers, either pushed forward by those behind them or driven by the leather whips of the SS. Most never say a word. A Jewess about 40 years old with flaming eyes curses the murderers with the blood that will be shed. She receives 5 or 6 hits to the face with a riding whip from Captain Wirth himself and then she, too, disappears into the chamber. – Many people pray.⁴⁹ I pray with them, I hide myself in a corner and yell out to my and their God. Oh how I would have liked to go into the chambers with them, how much I would have liked to die with them. Then they would have found a uniformed SS officer in their chambers – the whole thing would have been put down to an accident and forgotten without a fuss. But I cannot do this yet, I still have to spread the word of what I've experienced here! – The chambers fill up. Pack them full – that's what Captain Wirth ordered. The people stand on top of each other's feet. 700–800 over 25 square meters, in 45 cubic meters! The SS pushes them together physically, if it's even possible. – The doors close. In the meantime, others wait naked outside. They tell me:⁵⁰ It's exactly the same in winter! Yes, but they can catch their death! I say. – Yes, that's just why they're here! – an SS-man says to me in response in his Low German dialect. – Now I finally understand why the whole center is called the Heckenholt Foundation. Heckenholt is the chauffeur of the diesel motor, a little technician, at the same time the builder of the facility. The people are supposed to be put to death with the diesel exhaust gases. But the diesel motor doesn't work! Captain Wirth comes. You can tell that he is embarrassed that this had to happen today of all days while I am visiting. Yes, I see everything! And I wait. My stopwatch has honestly kept the time. 50 minutes, 70 minutes – the diesel motor won't start! The people wait

49 In the French text, the following is inserted here: “others say: Who will give us the water of the dead? (Israelite ritual?)” – The following four sentences are missing.

50 The following is more understandable and presumably more faithful than the French text due to the rendition of the original diction.

in their gas chambers. In vain. You can hear them crying, sobbing.⁵¹ ... Captain Wirth hits the Ukrainian who is supposed to help *Unterscharführer* Heckenholt with the diesel motor 12, 13 times in the face with his riding whip. After 2 hours and 49 minutes – my stopwatch has kept track – the diesel motor starts. Up until this moment, the people in these 4 chambers,⁵² four times 750 people in four times 45 cubic meters, are alive! – Another 25 minutes elapse. Right, many are now dead. You can see this through the little window when an electric lamp lights up the chamber for a moment. Only a few are still alive after 28 minutes. Finally, after 32 minutes, everything is dead!

Men from the labor battalion open the wooden doors from the other side. They – Jews themselves – have been promised freedom and a certain percentage of all the valuables collected in exchange for their dreadful work. The dead stand like basalt columns pressed upright against each other in the chambers. There wouldn't have been any room to fall down or even just bend forward. The families are recognizable, even in death. They still hold hands, cramped by death, making it difficult to separate them in order to empty the chambers for the next batch. The corpses are thrown out – wet from sweat and urine, covered in feces, menstrual blood running down legs. Children's bodies fly through the air. There is no time, the riding whips of the Ukrainians rain down on the labor battalions. Two dozen dentists⁵³ pry open the mouths with hooks and look for gold. Gold to the left, no gold to the right. Other dentists use pliers and hammers to break the gold teeth and crowns out of the jaws. –

Captain Wirth jumps about everywhere. He is in his element. – Some of the workers check genitalia and anuses for gold, diamonds and valuables. Wirth calls me over: Hold up this jar of gold teeth, this is just from yesterday and the day before! In unbelievably base and incorrect language, he says to me: You wouldn't believe how much we find in gold and diamonds – slightly mispronouncing the word diamonds – and dollars every day. Take a look yourself! And then he led me to a jeweler who was in charge of processing all these treasures and let me take a look at everything.⁵⁴ I was then shown one of the former directors of the *Kaufhaus des Westens* in Berlin and a violinist: this is a captain from the old Imperial-Royal Austrian Army, a knight of the Iron Cross 1st class, who is now the camp eldest in the Jewish labor battalion! – The naked bodies were then dragged a few meters further on wooden carts to ditches measuring 100x20x12 meters. After a few days,

51 A purely personal note follows here.

52 It is unclear why 4 rooms are mentioned instead of 3 here.

53 The more credible term used in the French text is “workers.”

54 The following is clearer than the French text.

the corpses bloated up and then collapsed together after a short time so that a new layer could be thrown on top. Then about 10 centimeters of sand were spread so that only a head or arm peaked out here and there. – At one of these spots, I saw Jews climbing over the bodies in the graves and working. I was told that, accidentally, the clothes had not been stripped from the bodies of those who arrived dead on one of the transports. Naturally, this had to be done now because they would otherwise take their clothing and valuables with them to the grave. – No effort was made in either Belzec or Treblinka to register or count the dead. The numbers were just estimates based on the capacity of the train cars.⁵⁵ – Commandant Wirth asked me not to suggest any changes to his facility when I was back in Berlin and to leave everything just as it was because everything had been running so smoothly and proved to be working well. – I supervised the burying of the hydrogen cyanide as it had purportedly degraded. –

On the next day – the 19th of August 1942 – we drove with Captain Wirth's car to Treblinka, 120 kilometers north-northeast of Warsaw. The center was about the same, just much larger than in Belzec. Eight gas chambers and literally mountains of suitcases, clothes and linens. A banquet in typical Himmleresque old-German style was held in our honor in the communal room. The food was simple, but there was plenty of everything. Himmler himself had decreed that the men in these battalions should get as much meat, butter and other things, especially alcohol, as they wanted.⁵⁶

We then drove to Warsaw. In my failed attempt to snag a bed in the sleeping car there, I met the secretary of the Swedish embassy in Berlin, Baron von Otter.⁵⁷ With these appalling experiences still so fresh in my mind, I told him everything and asked him to tell his government and the Allies immediately because every day's delay would cost thousands and tens of thousands of lives. He asked me for a reference, and I gave him the name of General Superintendent D. Otto Dibelius, Berlin, Brüderweg 2, Lichterfeld-West – a trusted friend of the pastor Martin Niemöller and a member of the church's resistance movement against the Nazis. I then met with Mr. von Otter two more times at the Swedish embassy. In the meantime, he had informed Stockholm and informed me that this report had made a huge impact on Swedish-German diplomatic relations.

⁵⁵ The French text here contains G.'s estimate as noted in the foreword. – In the German text, a few sentences follow about the sifting out of the "biologically worthless" (category III) in the Polish villages by the SS commissions. They have been left out here because they are obviously not part of the eyewitness report.

⁵⁶ A few sentences with personal notes follow here.

⁵⁷ On the following, see the foreword and note 10.

I also tried to inform the papal nuncio in Berlin about the same matter. At the embassy, I was asked whether I was a soldier. Then they declined to grant me an audience and I was asked to leave the embassy of His Holiness. As I was leaving the papal embassy, I was followed by a policeman on a bicycle who pedaled right past me and got off his bike, but then, for whatever reason, let me keep walking. I then told all of this to hundreds of people, including the legal advisor of the Catholic Bishop of Berlin, Dr. Winter, with the express request that he convey this information to the Holy See. – I must add that *SS-Sturmbahnführer* Günther from the *Reichsicherheitshauptamt* – I believe he is the son of the “Race Günther”⁵⁸ – once again demanded a very large quantity of hydrogen cyanide from me for a very dark purpose at the beginning of 1944. He showed me a shed on Kurfürstenstraße in Berlin in which he planned to store the hydrogen cyanide. I then told him that there would be absolutely no way (!) that I could take on the responsibility for this. We were talking about several train cars, enough to kill several million people. He told me that he did not know whether this poison was to be used, when, for whom, or in what way, etc. but that he had to make sure that it was always readily available. I later often thought about what Goebbels⁵⁹ had said. I can imagine that they wanted to kill a large portion of the German population, surely even the clergy or undesirable military officers. This was supposed to take place in some kind of reading rooms or clubs – this much I was able to discern from the technical questions related to usage that Günther asked me. It might also be that he was supposed to kill the foreign laborers or the prisoners of war – I don’t know. At any rate, I arranged for the hydrogen cyanide to disappear for some kind of disinfection purposes as soon as it arrived in the two concentration camps of Oranienburg and Auschwitz. This was somewhat dangerous for me, but I could have just said that the poison was already dangerously degraded. I am sure that Günther wanted to procure the poison in order to kill potentially millions of people. It was enough for about 8 million people, 8,500 kilograms. I submitted the invoices for 2,175 kilograms. I had the invoices made out in my name, ostensibly for the sake of discretion, but really in order to keep everything better under my control so that I could make the poison disappear. Above all, I avoided submitting the invoices which would bring the matter back to mind; rather, I preferred to leave the invoices completely unpaid and put off the company.⁶⁰ ...

⁵⁸ According to the information provided by the Document Center, this assumption is not true.

⁵⁹ In the French text: “about slamming shut the door.”

⁶⁰ Information follows here from the director of Degesch about the intended use of hydrogen cyanide in Theresienstadt as well as details that were obviously not personally observed related to

Incidentally, I also avoided appearing too often in the concentration camps, because it was often customary to hang or execute people in honor of visitors.⁶¹

Every word that I have written is true. I am fully aware of the extraordinary significance of these statements of mine before God and all mankind and I swear that nothing of that which I have recorded is fictitious or invented, but rather that everything was exactly so.⁶²

the “most appalling concentration camps” (Auschwitz and Mauthausen), medical experiments, and the disappearance of homosexuals in Oranienburg.

61 Gerstein adds details here that were told to him and speaks of 2 “anti-Nazis” in his office in connection to this. In the French text, only one of them is mentioned. The “supplements” (see note 5) mention 6 such names.

62 References follow, some of which are identical to those in the French text, but there are not as many. A few of the anti-Nazis are not mentioned who supposedly visited his apartment. For example, the two Dutch deportees Nieuwenhuiszen and his friend Hendrik, who, as noted in PS-1553, “who were my guests for a long time two or three times a week to eat and listen to the radio” ... (A letter from the two Dutchmen – Eindhoven 15 Oct. 46 – is included.) – The information about the people who visited his apartment (Autumn 44) has largely been confirmed by Dr. Ehlers, who, among others, writes (as cited above): “He had a housekeeper who had worked for years for a Jewish family and was then hired by the SS to do degrading cleaning work in the SS main office and who Gerstein took over for his own household. This older woman hated the National Socialists even more fervently Gerstein, which meant that the tone in this apartment was exceptionally radical. Incidentally, Gerstein, as always, was extremely careless. The English radio channel was constantly on air and blared quite loudly through the apartment. Apparently, the other residents in the house who surely heard this assumed that an *SS-Führer* would be allowed to listen to this channel in his official capacity...”

Valerie Hébert

Hans Rothfels, Kurt Gerstein and the Report: A Retrospective

The Documentation of 1953

The opening paragraphs to Hans Rothfels's 1953 commentary on the Gerstein report, published in the second issue of the *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, give the distinct impression that the author was preparing his audience for a heaping spoonful of foul-tasting medicine. The preamble is part apology, part warning: "Dealing with these atrocious events is not pleasant [but] exhibiting apathy [...] would signify the lapse of our moral vigilance and conscience once and for all."¹ Rothfels's stated goal for this piece was to bring to wider attention, particularly of historians, a document that had hitherto only been used in various trials of accused war criminals. The report was a written testimony by *SS-Obersturmführer* Kurt Gerstein. Gerstein had lent technical expertise to the evolution of the killing process employed in the death camps in Poland, specifically the transition from diesel exhaust to cyanide gas, and later had been tasked with setting up monthly shipments of Zyklon B from the Degesch firm (which sold the poison) to Auschwitz and Oranienburg. The report provided a brief autobiographical sketch, in which Gerstein, an avowed anti-Nazi, claimed to have joined the SS for no other reason than to learn more about the regime's crimes, to sabotage them where he could, and to spread knowledge about these atrocities to contacts in and outside Germany. The heart of the document, and the reason why it became such an important piece of evidence for trials of accused war criminals, was its moment-by-moment description of the mass gassing at Belzec of a deportation of Jews from Lvov in August 1942. It was and remains an exceptionally rare and valuable primary source, and yet Rothfels felt compelled to justify giving the text page space in this academic journal. His commentary is earnest, deliberate, and urging. It is revealing of the contemporary social-intellectual moment in West Germany that Rothfels anticipated that Gerstein's report, which discussed the SS,

¹ Hans Rothfels, *Eyewitness Report on Mass Gassings*, pp. 63–83, here p. 64 of this volume. The foregoing is a re-publication and translation of the original: *Augenzeugenbericht zu den Massenvergasungen*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 1 (1953), pp. 177–94. In referring to this article, I will use the words and pagination of the re-published article found in the present Yearbook.

gas chambers, and the murder of Jews, would be seen as provocative. Preemptively, it would seem, Rothfels appeals to the journal's mandate and to the historian's obligation, "not [to] skirt around controversial issues [...] and leave room for legends to take hold. The best place to start living up to this duty is naturally on our own doorstep."² If reading Gerstein's report was necessary for an honest view of the past, what did it say, and what did Rothfels want his audience to think about Gerstein?

"The" Report

Although the literature on Gerstein most often references his "report," in fact Gerstein wrote a few nearly identical reports, including one in French by hand on 26 April 1945, a second, typed in German on 4 May, and part of a third, in French on 6 May.³ Rothfels's commentary begins by discussing the 26 April 1945 French report, of which he had a typed transcription. Only five days prior, Gerstein had turned himself over to French military forces who placed him in a kind of house arrest at a requisitioned hotel in Rottweil.⁴ He composed the French report and attempted, unsuccessfully, to submit it to French forces. Rejected by the French, Gerstein gave the report to two local Allied intelligence officers, Major John Haught (American) and Mr. Derek Curtis Evans (British) on 5 May, telling them that he had knowledge of the mass gassings and wished to be used as a witness

² Rothfels, *Eyewitness Report*, p. 64.

³ Gerstein's reports were transcribed and translated many times for various trials. To view the original French version, see Evangelische Kirche von Westfalen, Landeskirchliches Archiv, Bielefeld (hereafter LAB), Bestand 5,2, no. 34, Kurt Gerstein: French Report, 26 April 1945. That same archive possesses an incomplete copy of the typed German report of 4 May 1945. It is missing the supplemental pages in which Gerstein elaborated upon other Nazi crimes. A complete copy of the typed German report 4 May 1945 is held at the Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen, Ludwigsburg (hereafter ZStL), 206 AR-Z 827/63, Bl. 2228–45. Various photographic copies, transcriptions and translations of Gerstein's French report along with materials he appended to that version and Intelligence officers Haught and Evans's assessment can be viewed at the Harvard Law School Library (hereafter HLSL), Nuremberg Trials Project: A Digital Document Collection. Search the Gerstein report by its International Military Tribunal Evidence code: PS-1553; <http://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/php/search.php>. In 1964, Léon Poliakov published Gerstein's French report along with various supporting materials: *Le Dossier Kurt Gerstein*, in: *Le Monde Juif* 1 (1964), pp. 4–20. A fragment of Gerstein's handwritten French report of 6 May 1945 is located at LAB, Bestand 5,2, no. 32.

⁴ LAB, Bestand 5,2, no. 489a, Verbal proceeding of Kurt Gerstein at the 2nd Permanent Military Tribunal in Paris, 13 July 1945.

against war criminals. Along with his report, he gave them twelve invoices from the Degesch Company for Zyklon B shipments to Auschwitz and Oranienburg, a letter from Degesch to himself, as well as a religious pamphlet he had written prior to the war.⁵ On 25 July 1945, soon after the French authorities charged Gerstein with murder and being an accessory to murder, he committed suicide in a prison cell in Paris.⁶ It therefore became impossible to question him any further about his activities or clear up inconsistencies and gaps in the reports. The French report, along with Haught and Evans's summary of their conversation with Gerstein, were submitted as evidence in various war crimes trials: the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1945, the Nuremberg Doctors' and SS Economics and Administrative Department trials in 1947, and Germany's first poison gas trial of the Degesch firm in 1949.⁷

The report that Rothfels reproduced for the journal was, however, the German version from 4 May 1945. Gerstein had written this report for his wife, Elfriede, who was not aware of its existence until over a year later.⁸ In any case, it was this version of the report that was used in Gerstein's 1950 Denazification hearing. Typically there would not have been such a hearing for a deceased person, but records indicate that Gerstein's widow requested the proceeding in order to determine whether she might collect a pension based on her husband's former position in the civil service, which was cut short as punishment for his prewar resistance activities. The report was of central importance for the court's assessment of his character and connection to the Nazi regime.⁹ Rothfels does not indicate how he came across the report, but it may have been in connection with this proceeding. In any case, it is clear that Rothfels studied and compared both the French and

5 See Rothfels, *Eyewitness Report*, pp. 64–65, and Major D.C. Evans and Mr. J.W. Haught, CIOS Consolidated Advance Field Team (VII), *Assessment Report*, for CIOS Secretariat, SHAEF (REAR), 5 May 1943 (sic! – should read 1945), Document PS-1553, HLSL, Item No. 2515; <http://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/php/search.php>.

6 LAB, Bestand 5,2, no. 489a, Verbal proceeding of Kurt Gerstein at the 2nd Permanent Military Tribunal in Paris, 13 July 1945.

7 Images of original Degesch invoices, Document PS-1553, HLSL, Item No. 2515; <http://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/php/search.php>. Materials related to the Degesch case are published in Irene Sagel-Grande/H.H. Fuchs/C.F. Rüter (eds.), *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen. Sammlung deutscher Strafurteile wegen nationalsozialistischer Tötungsverbrechen 1945–1966*, vol. 13, Amsterdam 1975, Lfd. No. 415: Massenvernichtungsverbrechen in Lagern.

8 See Rothfels, *Eyewitness Report*, p. 65, note 4: Statement by Frau Gerstein, 13 December 1952.

9 Staatsarchiv Sigmaringen (hereafter SAS), Bestand Wü 13: Staatskommissariat für die politische Säuberung in Württemberg-Hohenzollern, Az. 15/T/F/1035: Province State Commissariat for Political Cleansing, Denazification Tribunal, judgments with reasons, 17 August 1950 and 16 November 1950.

German reports (26 April and 4 May). It should be noted here that he never mentions Gerstein's incomplete third report (6 May) in his article, and it is unclear whether he knew of its existence at the time of his writing the commentary. After reviewing the first two reports, he chose to publish the German one, for various reasons. Although written later than the French report, typed and unsigned, Rothfels had no doubt that it also came directly from Gerstein. In terms of their facts, Rothfels declared, the reports were "by and large identical." In Rothfels' opinion, the French version was less precise, which he attributed to Gerstein not being a native French speaker. Further, Rothfels believed that in places the French report was given to exaggeration, which he believed stemmed from Gerstein's desire to make an impact on his readers. Rothfels claimed (without elaboration) that the German report was "clearer as well as more detailed."¹⁰ Close reading of both reports shows that the differences are indeed minor, and are peripheral to the gassing scene at Belzec, which is the climactic core of both documents and the reason for their enduring significance.

The Published Narrative

Rothfels did not publish the 4 May 1945 report in its entirety. He included only those sections whose contents he corroborated by researching Nazi documents, consulting with Polish investigators of Belzec, and interviewing German and foreign contacts (including highly placed religious and political figures) to whom Gerstein had spoken about what he had witnessed. Rothfels omitted sections of the report where Gerstein described atrocities against Jews and other foreign nationals that he had not necessarily witnessed personally. What follows, therefore, are the key aspects of Gerstein's life and activities drawn from Gerstein's report as endorsed by Rothfels.

Kurt Gerstein, born in 1905 in Münster, was a Prussian state mining assessor and graduate engineer. He was a devout Protestant and active member of the Evangelical youth organization and university Bible circles since the 1920s. Although he joined the Nazi party very early (May 1933), his religious convictions caused several run-ins with the state. He claimed to have been under Gestapo investigation since 1933, and he was publicly beaten for interrupting a Nazi-sponsored event. He was arrested for the first time in September 1936 for distributing brochures critical of the regime. This prompted his expulsion from the Party in

¹⁰ Rothfels, *Eyewitness Report*, p. 66.

October 1936. Thereafter, Gerstein took up medical studies and continued to distribute religious and anti-Nazi pamphlets. For this he was arrested again in 1938, incarcerated in the Welzheim concentration camp, and placed under a speaking ban for the entire Reich. Gerstein writes that, upon hearing about the killing of the mentally ill in Grafeneck and Hadamar and elsewhere, “I decided that I would at least try to get a look inside these ovens and chambers in order to find out what was happening there.” He was all the more devoted to this mission because a relative had been killed in Hadamar. Two Gestapo agents familiar with his case believed that his “idealism” should be “harnessed for the Nazi cause,” and with their help he was accepted into the SS. Owing to his education, he was assigned to the medical engineering unit of the *Waffen-SS* Sanitation Service. At first he constructed disinfection systems for soldiers as well as POW and concentration camps. His technical achievements led to promotion and he became head of the health-engineering department, which included developing disinfection services using poisonous gases.¹¹

One day in June 1942, *SS-Sturmbannführer* Rolf Günther of the SS Reich Security Main Office visited Gerstein and ordered him to acquire a quantity of cyanide gas and take it to a location known only to the driver of the car in which he would travel. Gerstein suspected that the gas was to be used for killing, but agreed to the assignment so that he could gain first-hand knowledge of these matters. He and Dr. Wilhelm Pfannenstiel, a professor of Hygiene at Marburg/Lahn University, arrived in Lublin on 17 August 1942 where they met *SS-Gruppenführer* Odilo Globocnik, who told them about the Belzec, Treblinka, Sobibor, and Maidanek camps and swore them to secrecy, on pain of death.¹² Globocnik told Gerstein that his task was to disinfect the large amounts of clothing left behind by the victims and to convert existing gas chambers from operating with diesel exhaust to something more fast acting. Gerstein, Globocnik, and Pfannenstiel continued on to Belzec, where they met the camp commandant Christian Wirth. While there, a convoy of Jews from Lvov arrived. Over 5000 men, women, and children were ordered to hand over all of their possessions, clothing, even eyeglasses and prostheses. Women and girls had their hair cut “with just two or three scissor snips.” An SS man calmly reassured the assembled deportees that they would undergo a disinfection treatment to ward off disease before being put to work. He urged them to breathe deeply in the “inhalation rooms.” Gerstein was positioned along-

¹¹ The material and direct quotes included here pertaining to the 4 May 1945 German report are taken from the version published in this volume, which is also the version published by Rothfels in 1953.

¹² In his report, Gerstein incorrectly spelled his name, rendering it as: “Globocnek.”

side Wirth on a ramp between two of the gas chambers. His descriptions of individuals on the threshold of death are vivid, sympathetic, and humanizing:

For some of the poor souls, this small ray of hope is enough to get them to take the few steps to the chambers without resisting in any way – the majority knows, the smell tells them of their fate! – And so they climb up the small set of stairs and then they see everything. Mothers with children held to their breasts, small naked children, adults, men, and women, all naked – they hesitate, but they walk into the death chambers, either pushed forward by those behind them or driven by the leather whips of the SS. Most never say a word. A Jewess about 40 years old with flaming eyes curses the murderers with the blood that will be shed. She receives 5 or 6 hits to the face with a riding whip from Captain Wirth himself and then she, too, disappears into the chamber. – Many people pray. I pray with them, I hide myself in a corner and yell out to my and their God. [...] The chambers fill up. [...] You can hear them crying, sobbing.

A technician tried and failed to start the diesel motor that would pump exhaust into the gas chambers. Only after an agonizing 2 hours, 49 minutes (Gerstein was timing the events) did the motor begin, and after 32 minutes, all were dead. Camp workers pulled the bodies from the chambers. Gerstein noticed that whole families were still identifiable, as their hands remained clasped even in death. The workers removed gold teeth and searched bodies for hidden valuables. Wirth invited Gerstein to feel the weight of a can containing the previous day's collection. The bodies were then buried in massive pits. Gerstein, claiming that the gas he had brought with him had spoiled, ensured that it was also buried. Gerstein visited Treblinka the following day, which in overall process resembled Belzec only on a much larger scale. On his return journey from Warsaw aboard a train, Gerstein happened to meet Baron von Otter of the Swedish Embassy in Berlin, told him everything, and asked him to communicate the news to his government and the Allies.

Gerstein insists that during the time after Belzec he told “hundreds” of people about what he knew, including Berlin's Papal Nuncio and Catholic Bishop. Then the report jumps to 1944 (not just in the version edited by Rothfels, but also in the original), at which point Gerstein declares that *SS-Sturmbannführer* Günther once again visited and ordered him to acquire enough hydrogen cyanide gas to kill millions of people. Although Günther did not reveal the intended purpose of this gas, Gerstein suspected that it might be used against the German population, including clergy and “undesirable military officers,” or foreign labourers or POWs. In any case, Gerstein claimed, when the gas was delivered to Auschwitz and Oranienburg, he made sure that it was used for non-lethal purposes. (In his commentary, Rothfels references the invoices from these very shipments, dated 14 February to 31 May 1944, which Gerstein attached to his French report.) Ger-

stein added that he avoided visiting concentration camps “too often” as it was customary to execute prisoners in honour of official guests. Rothfels’s edition of the report ended with Gerstein declaring that “every word [...] written is true [...] everything was exactly so.”

The Historian

Although Rothfels had gone to great lengths to authenticate the contents of the report, and only published those sections that he found reliable, even he admitted, “not every word can be taken at face value.”¹³ Gerstein said there were 200 Ukrainian auxiliaries at Belzec, 100 chairs where Jewish women sat to have their hair cut, that Captain Wirth struck a camp functionary 12-13 times in the face when he failed to get the diesel motor started. It was with reference to specific details such as these that Rothfels was cautious and forgiving of error. For Rothfels, these figures did not undermine the overall account of events at Belzec, and it was that scene that constituted the “real value” of the document. The adjectives Rothfels uses to refer to these events: “shocking,” “ghastly,” “horrific” mirror Gerstein’s own emotional reaction.¹⁴ It is telling that Rothfels left that segment of the report intact. It spoke for itself. But still, to what end? Why did Rothfels publish Gerstein’s report, and why in the *Vierteljahrshefte*?

Hans Rothfels is a figure of lingering controversy. Born Jewish but converted to Protestantism, he was a devoted German nationalist, politically conservative, and had fought for his country in the Great War. He lost a leg but won an Iron Cross for his service. In 1926 he became chair of history at the University of Königsberg. His scholarship reflected his patriotism. He published on Clausewitz and Bismarck, and made significant contributions to the emerging fields of *Volksgeschichte* and *Ostforschung*. There was an untidy overlap between aspects of Rothfels’ politics and research, and parts of the National Socialist vision for Germany, such as a desired revision of Versailles and (re)expansion into the East. Although the degree of his support for the NSDAP remains a matter of charged debate, in the 1930s the Nazis decided for him what his official relationship to the state would be. Rothfels’ Jewish heritage prompted his removal from his uni-

¹³ Rothfels, Eyewitness Report, p. 67.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 71.

versity chair in 1934. State authorities barred him from teaching altogether the following year.¹⁵

While in exile in the United States, Rothfels wrote *The German Opposition to Hitler*.¹⁶ In it, Rothfels presented a counter-narrative to the contemporary view of the military men who attempted the 20th July coup. As he described them, they were neither traitors to the nation nor re-branded Prussian militarists. Rather, they were motivated by a truer German nationalism than the one espoused by the Third Reich. The core of his analysis therefore offered a salutary image of German identity. Indeed, Rothfels' sympathetic view of the conspirators extended to the German people as a whole. In the book, the German people were "unwilling subjects of a barbaric dictatorship," whose anti-Jewish policies they did not welcome. They, too, had suffered terribly in Allied bombing campaigns and as a result of the forced expulsions in the postwar territorial rearrangements of Central and East Europe.¹⁷

Rothfels returned to the Federal Republic in 1951 and took up a chair in history at the university in Tübingen. His founding of the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich reflected his desire to resuscitate historical scholarship and release the trajectory of German history and German national identity from the spasm of Nazi fanaticism. To his mind the recent past was of indispensable political significance and historians had a responsibility to advance the understanding of that past by writing *Zeitgeschichte*: contemporary history. Rothfels outlined the purpose and methodology of this new field in the first article of first issue of journal of the institute he founded. Entitled *Zeitgeschichte als Aufgabe* (contemporary history as a task), Rothfels's essay called for the collection and

15 On Rothfels and *Zeitgeschichte*, see Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories. The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany*, Berkeley 2001; Jan Eckel, Hans Rothfels. Eine intellektuelle Biographie im 20. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 2005; Johannes Hürter/Hans Woller (eds.), *Hans Rothfels und die deutsche Zeitgeschichte*, Munich 2005; Alan E. Steinweis, Jan Eckel: Hans Rothfels, in: *Sehepunkte* 7 (2007) 2. In 2003, Nicolas Berg published a monograph criticizing West German historians' treatment of the Holocaust in the immediate postwar period. He argued that key academic figures did not examine their own pasts, were "too" focused on German resistance to Nazism, and marginalized the Final Solution and works by Jewish scholars. The book was translated into English in 2015. See that work and the persuasive critical response: Nicholas Berg, *The Holocaust and the West German Historians. Historical Interpretation and Autobiographical Memory*, Madison 2015, and Irmtrud Wojak, *Nicolas Berg and the West German Historians. A Response to his "handbook" on the historiography of the Holocaust*, in: *German History* 22 (2004), pp. 101–18.

16 See Hans Rothfels, *The German Opposition to Hitler. An Appraisal*, Hinsdale 1948. It was published in German in 1949.

17 See Steinweis, Jan Eckel: Hans Rothfels.

archiving of the scattered primary sources that would permit examination of the past since 1917.¹⁸ Historians had to expand their view of what constituted evidence, moving beyond the material produced by state agencies and stored in official archives. Rothfels wanted historians to apply their skills and their rigorous judgment to the past of their own memory, and to the everyday lived experiences of their people.¹⁹ Rothfels's advancement of *Zeitgeschichte* and the creation of an institutional home for it was a daring step. At that time there was no chair of *Zeitgeschichte* anywhere in Germany, and no one associated with the field taught at Munich's Ludwig-Maximilian University.²⁰ The Institute took an early lead in sponsoring vast research projects into the Nazi destruction of the Jews and published early works on the Third Reich. But the Institute also pursued extensive investigations into the subjects of German resistance to Nazism and of German suffering during the Soviets' brutal conquest of Germany and during the postwar expulsions from the East. To some observers its emphasis on German struggle and pain detracted from proper acknowledgment of Jewish suffering and, indeed, its German origins.²¹

The Article

At first glance, the Gerstein article might seem to fall in line with Rothfels's overall intellectual project to redeem and affirm German national identity in the aftermath of World War II. Here was a story of a "good German," implying possibly that there were many more like him, that he was the truer representative of his nation, and that the Germans of today need not entirely disavow their past. This suspicion, however, falls apart upon closer consideration. Returning to Gerstein's report as published by Rothfels, what we notice is the exceptionality of his opposition and the loneliness of his mission. Gerstein had no allies as deeply committed to resistance as himself. And as an early statement on the destruction of the Jews, Gerstein's report had far-reaching implications for German conscience. It showed that the murder of Jews was part of an elaborate plan directed from Berlin and carried out across the continent by German and Austrian Nazis. Gerstein made clear the connection to German industry, the sheer brutality of

¹⁸ See Hans Rothfels, *Zeitgeschichte als Aufgabe*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 1 (1953), pp. 1–8.

¹⁹ See Moeller, *War Stories*, pp. 59–60.

²⁰ See Wojak, *Nicolas Berg*, pp. 106–07.

²¹ See Berg, *Holocaust*, and Wojak, *Nicolas Berg*.

the killing process, the lies told to the victims to the very end, and the victims' individual suffering. He demonstrated how the Nazi state enriched itself through theft of the Jews' property, down to the clothing on their backs, the teeth in their mouths, the hair on their heads. German readers of the report could no longer claim that the Jews had only been sent away to work, that the *Volk's* unity and generosity were responsible for the success of the clothing drives, or that anyway, the Jews were "less human" than they were, that it was wartime and everyone suffered in comparable ways.

Rothfels declares that Gerstein's report was necessary to undermine revisionist legends, which were already in circulation. It is significant that he footnotes a recent press article downplaying the Jewish death toll.²² And although by employing an "us-them" paradigm he seems to hold Nazi crimes at arm's length, he clearly accepts ownership of the crimes' legacy. He writes that it was a *unique* feature of *the Third Reich* that *the state* systematized mass murder and determined which lives were worth living, but adds that these events nonetheless have cast a "merciless shadow" on the present, and exposed the essential fragility of civilization. To forget these crimes or to trivialize them, he continues, the Germans "would not only be exhibiting apathy and unscrupulousness towards the victims of this period, but would also signify the lapse of our vigilance and conscience once and for all."²³ Rothfels doesn't quite accept responsibility, on behalf of the German people, for the failure of conscience during the Nazi era, but he does insist that the German people are uniquely responsible for confronting this past and making its lessons part of their postwar identity. This is what he means when he writes that "the Gerstein report is part of 'contemporary history' in the truest sense of the word."²⁴

Rothfels's commentary was not limited to authenticating and explaining the report, but included an early assessment of its author. Gerstein the man must also have represented something Rothfels wanted his readership to consider. In order to corroborate claims Gerstein made about himself in his report, Rothfels sought out Gerstein's friends and contacts. Reinforced by their testimony, Rothfels believed the image that Gerstein had presented of himself: "a dedicated ethical-religious opponent of the Nazis' church and racial policies."²⁵ This bears reflection. Gerstein was not motivated by loyalty to an alternate political platform, nor by disagreement with the prosecution of the war, as were so many other

²² See Rothfels, *Eyewitness Report*, p. 66, note 6.

²³ Italics added; *ibid.*, p. 64.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

resistance figures that Rothfels researched and wrote about. Gerstein was moved by faith and viewed Nazi crimes in their moral dimension. And in this he never wavered. Rothfels believed that Gerstein joined the SS in its activities only in order to prevent worse things from occurring, but then, tragically, became “a prisoner of the path that he had quite consciously chosen.”²⁶ Although the Denazification tribunal held this against him, calling Gerstein “an important link in the chain of responsible people,” Rothfels is more generous in his analysis. He cites Gerstein’s own claims that his hands were clean, and interprets Gerstein’s decision to submit along with his report the Degesch invoices made out in his name as evidence of his success in sabotaging the gas’s intended use. Still, Rothfels admits that even successful sabotage “could not have changed the entire course of events.” Even “success” might have been meaningless to the larger history.

But the outcome of Gerstein’s actions is not the measure by which Rothfels assesses the value of Gerstein’s life. Interestingly, Rothfels gives the last word on Gerstein’s life to one of the latter’s close friends, Otto Wehr, and we can infer from this decision that it must have resonated with Rothfels’ personal conclusion on the matter. Wehr declared that all “political-psychological” attempts to judge Gerstein would fall short in their attempt to reconcile Gerstein’s private political oppositions with his public Nazi loyalty. For Wehr, and seemingly for Rothfels, the enduring meaning of Gerstein’s life lay in “the constancy of his inner being.”²⁷ Gerstein may have served the Nazi state, but he was no Nazi. He shared none of the Nazis’ values or goals, but he took personal responsibility for confronting and opposing them. Although that drew him “into the very heart of this criminal apparatus,” it did not overwhelm him or shake his beliefs. Gerstein withstood the agony of what he witnessed during his time with the SS, only to take his own life once he realized the Allies doubted the sincerity of his intentions. The lasting lesson Rothfels wanted to impart to his readers seems to have been that Gerstein provided an example of the inner fortitude needed to confront and take responsibility for the Nazi past. In other words, whether they had been supporters of the Nazis or not, all Germans had a role in answering for it, and the task would be an arduous one.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 71–72.

27 Otto Wehr, quoted in: *ibid.*, p. 72.

Gerstein in the Eye of Historical Judgment

The Tragic Hero: Gerstein and his report(s) are everywhere in histories of the Holocaust and the Nazi state; he is the subject of several biographies, has appeared in popular cultural reflections on the Third Reich, and he figures in various legal proceedings spanning the 24 years following his death. How have continued engagements with Gerstein and his remarkable life added to Rothfels' preliminary assessment?

Rothfels was clear in telling his readers that the version of the report that he published was an excerpt. Reading Gerstein's report in its entirety reveals that Gerstein was very well informed about the spectrum of Nazi crimes, and that this knowledge left him with a heavy emotional burden. Much of what he described he had heard from other SS men and occupation government authorities in Poland. He mentioned the mass shootings of thousands of Polish priests. After forcing them to dig their own graves and disrobe, the SS taunted them about their faith and then shot them. Polish intellectuals, including male and female teachers, met a similar fate. SS men disguised as doctors traveled the countryside rounding up "worthless" Poles and Czechs, particularly the elderly, consumptives and other patients. He relayed the claim by an SS contact that it was customary to kill young Jewish children by smashing their heads against the wall. This same SS man remembered two girls aged only 5 and 8 years begging him on their knees not to shoot them. They were shot anyway. Gerstein knew about the practice of forcing people to lie down on the still warm bodies of previous victims before being shot themselves. Gerstein had heard about mass deaths in POW camps, about the capture and torture of a Jewish member of the Polish underground, and the brutality and sadistic ridiculing directed at camp prisoners. He was bothered that Jews were made to participate in their own destruction. He claimed to have observed himself experiments performed on living prisoners at Ravensbrück (and named the doctors involved) and knew of similar experiments at Buchenwald. He had heard about the sudden disappearance of homosexuals at Oranienburg "into the ovens," and how at Mauthausen it was common to throw prisoners off the edge of the quarry and to register their deaths as accidents. Gerstein confessed that certain scenes haunted him: a 3 to 4-year-old Jewish boy (*Judenbübchen*) distributing pieces of string to his fellow deportees in the undressing room so that they could tie their shoes together; the little girl who looked for her beaded necklace one meter from the gas chamber door; a three year old boy who was picked up and hurled into the gas chamber. He insisted that the worst camps were not Oranienburg or Belsen or Dachau – but Auschwitz and Mauthausen-Gusen. Although Rothfels chose not to include these passages of the report in his 1953 article, we know now that Gerstein was indeed correct about all these things.

We know too that Gerstein tried desperately to spread this knowledge to Allied powers and Christian leaders, in the tragically mistaken belief that if they knew about these atrocities, they would force an end to them.²⁸

Gerstein's effort to alert the Vatican to the destruction of the Jews forms the basis of Rolf Hochhuth's 1963 play *Der Stellvertreter* (published in English as "The Deputy").²⁹ The play opens in August 1942 Berlin with Gerstein describing what he's just witnessed at Belzec to the papal nuncio and pleading with him to urge the Pope to condemn the Nazis' persecution of the Jews. Although Gerstein is cut short and shown the door, a sympathetic Jesuit priest, Riccardo Fontana, resolves to take the information to the pope himself. The pope, unmoved, refuses to intervene in the plight of the Jews. The play was an international sensation. In its first year of production, it was staged in ten German and eleven North American cities, was the subject of 3000 reviews, letters to the editor, and commentaries, and sparked two public debates in Berlin, each of which attracted over 1000 attendees. The play has been translated into twelve languages including Japanese and Hebrew. As much as it "demolished" Pope Pius XII's reputation, it popularized an image of Gerstein as a tragic hero.³⁰ In 2002, the celebrated director Costa-Gavras adapted Hochhuth's play to a film entitled "Amen." Gerstein figures more prominently in the screenplay than he did on the stage, and his double role as SS officer and saboteur is thrown into sharper relief. The Gerstein in "Amen" comes slowly to the realization of the Nazis' crimes, and is presented as more naïve about the regime than he in all likelihood was. But ultimately it is his stalwart and solitary dedication to resistance that defines him.³¹

The Witness: Gerstein was able to achieve in death what had eluded him in life: he became a witness to the destruction of the Jews and helped bring Nazi war criminals to justice. Following the 1953 publication of Rothfels's article, Gerstein's report became the subject of numerous newspapers and radio programs. The Central Federal Office of the Home Service printed it as a supplement to *Das Parlament*, its weekly magazine, and published an additional 100,000 copies as a

28 For this material, I drew from both the French 26 April 1945 and 6 May 1945 and German 4 May 1945 reports. LAB, Bestand 5,2, no. 32 and 34, Gerstein, Report, 26 April 1945 and fragment 6 May 1945; ZStL, 206 AR-Z 827/63, Bl. 2228–2245, Gerstein, Report, 4 May 1945.

29 See Rolf Hochhuth, *Der Stellvertreter*, Berlin 1963, and *The Deputy*. With a foreword by Albert Schweitzer, trans. by Clara Winston and Richard Winston, New York 1964.

30 See Jacques Kornberg, *The Pope's Dilemma: Pius XII Faces Atrocities and Genocide in the Second World War*, Toronto 2015, pp. 14–16. See also *Der Spiegel*, 24 April 1963: "Ein Kampf mit Rom."

31 *Amen*, directed by Constantin Costa-Gavras, Screenplay by Constantin Costa-Gavras and Jean-Claude Grumberg, 2002.

special issue.³² As for the report's role in postwar prosecutions of Nazis, Rothfels cited its use in two Nuremberg cases: the IMT and the Doctor's Trial. In the latter case, Gerstein's former superior at the SS Hygiene Institute, Dr. Joachim Mru-gowsky received a death sentence. Many other prominent courts recognized the value of Gerstein's written testimony. It was accepted as evidence in the Nuremberg Pohl case that charged 18 members of the SS for their leadership positions in carrying out the Final Solution. Similarly, it figured in the Nuremberg trial of 24 men connected to the IG Farben conglomerate, which apart from exploiting slave labour, was linked to the production and sale of Zyklon B. Gerstein's report served in two West German cases: the Belzec and Degesch trials. More will be said about the latter below. When Gideon Hausner was preparing the prosecution's case against Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem, he chose Gerstein's report to stand in as an eyewitness to Belzec. The death camp had consumed 600,000 Jewish lives, and Israeli investigators could find no survivor to testify to what had happened there. After exhaustive work of authentication and corroboration, Hausner read Gerstein's report aloud in court. In linking Eichmann's deputy Rolf Günther to the acquisition of Zyklon B in June 1942, Gerstein's report helped convince the judges that Eichmann was also connected to introducing Zyklon B in Auschwitz.³³

Given the report's decades-long pedigree as key evidence in international trials of war criminals, it is jarring to notice that it appears quite frequently in Holocaust denial literature and websites. Most often the deniers in these instances take issue with Gerstein's estimates of the gas chambers' dimensions and capacity at Belzec.³⁴ Gerstein was indeed prone to exaggeration of certain details. In

³² See Wojak, *Nicolas Berg*, p. 102.

³³ See Gideon Hausner, *Justice in Jerusalem*, New York 1966, pp. 346, 421. Interestingly, Adolf Eichmann himself appears to have been aware of Gerstein's report while still living under an alias in Argentina. He called Gerstein an "a- with ears" in his interviews with Willem Sassen. See Bettina Stangneth, *Eichmann before Jerusalem. The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer*, New York 2014, p. 265.

³⁴ Infamous Holocaust deniers such as Paul Rassinier (*Debunking the Genocide Myth*), Henri Roques (*The "Confessions" of Kurt Gerstein*), and Robert Faurisson (*How Historian Gilbert Fal-sifies and Invents*) have all made attempts to discredit the Gerstein reports. In a bizarre twist, Charles Provan, a revisionist history enthusiast from Pennsylvania, decided to test Gerstein's dimensions by building a (reduced) scale model of the gas chamber and placing his children and friends inside it. They fit, confirming that Gerstein's estimates were entirely plausible. He sent the report and photographs of his experiment to the Institute for Historical Review, known for its advancement of Holocaust denial material. He wished for them to communicate his findings to Faurisson and Fritz Berg, in order that they might be useful in proving that revisionists were not against "examining all sides of controversies." See the report by Charles Provan and photographs here: http://holocaust.skeptik.net/documents/provan_gerstein.html.

one version of his report he estimated the total number of Jewish victims to be 25 million; in others, the pile of shoes left behind by the victims at Belzec is 25 meters high and the piles of clothing at Treblinka were 35 to 40 meters high. These miscalculations or even deliberate overestimations by Gerstein's anguished mind in no way diminish the reality of the Nazi intention to murder millions of Jews by a variety of means that included gas chambers in camps dedicated to killing. One of the world's foremost historians of the Holocaust, Christopher Browning, addressed this very issue when he introduced the Gerstein report into evidence at the David Irving trial.

In 1996, the now-discredited historian David Irving sued Deborah Lipstadt and her British publisher Penguin Books for libel, claiming that she had defamed him in her 1993 monograph *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, in which she called him "a dangerous spokesperson for denial." In order to win the case, Lipstadt and her defense team had to prove that her allegation was correct, and that Irving, an apologist for Hitler, had misrepresented and manipulated historical evidence of the Nazi regime's destruction of the Jews. To do this, the court called upon leading scholars of the Holocaust and Nazi Germany as key expert witnesses to present the documentary proof of this history.³⁵ Browning presented evidence for the implementation of the Final Solution. In the section on gassings at the Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka camps, he prioritized eyewitness testimony of German visitors. The pool of available evidence was shallow, but in his opinion three testimonies possessed unassailable value. One belonged to Eichmann, one to Gerstein, and one to Gerstein's companion on the visit to Belzec, Wilhelm Pfannenstiel. Browning acknowledges some of the problematic figures in Gerstein's account but concludes: "in the essential issue, namely that he was in Belzec and witnessed the gassing of a transport of Jews from Lwow, his testimony is fully corroborated."³⁶

From the image of Gerstein as tragic hero, to the role of his report as precious evidence of the Holocaust and a key tool in preserving its memory and prosecuting its perpetrators, we come to Gerstein's place in scholarly and popular literature. Here too, one finds consensus overall. There are four biographies. Each

35 See Deborah Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, New York 1993; Richard J. Evans, *Telling Lies about Hitler. The Holocaust, History and the David Irving Trial*, London/New York 2002; Deborah Lipstadt, *History on Trial. My Day in Court with David Irving*, New York 2005. Emory University has digitized primary source material related to the Irving Trial, including the defense, evidence documents, transcripts, judgment, and appeal. See <http://www.hdot.org/en/trial/index.html>.

36 Christopher R. Browning, *Evidence for the Implementation of the Final Solution: Electronic Edition*; <http://www.hdot.org/en/trial/defense/browning/541.html>.

makes distinctive contributions. Saul Friedländer's *The Ambiguity of Good* (1967) is best at addressing head-on the challenge in coming to terms with someone who both served and opposed a criminal regime, although that discussion ends with the Denazification verdict. Kurt Franz's *Kurt Gerstein: Außenseiter des Widerstandes der Kirche gegen Hitler* (1964) provides the best examination of Gerstein's motivations for resistance, which were Christian in origin and required direct action.³⁷ Major works on the Holocaust, the German resistance, and the Vatican's response to the Second World War commonly mention Gerstein. The recurring characterization is that he was a devout Christian who joined the SS in order to discover the truth of its crimes, to oppose them when he could, and to communicate knowledge of these atrocities to contacts at home and abroad. Most works focus on his visit to Belzec and his frustrated attempt to get word to the Pope. Some scholars have wrongly identified him as the sole supplier of Zyklon B to Auschwitz. Others have discounted the value of his efforts, pointing out that the Allies, Vatican and neutral powers were already well informed about the essential facts and scope of anti-Jewish persecution by the time Gerstein communicated his account of Belzec. Works of greater historical nuance understand that Gerstein's courageous actions are meaningful not only in their own right, but even more so when contrasted with the indifference of the vast majority of his contemporaries.³⁸

37 Biographies and articles focused on Gerstein include the following: Florent Brayard, Humanitarian Concern versus Zyklon B, in: John K. Roth/Elisabeth Maxwell (eds.), *Remembering for the Future. The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide*, vol. 2, Basingstoke 2001, pp. 54–65; Florent Brayard, Un rapport précoce de Kurt Gerstein, in: *Bulletin du Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem* 6 (2000), pp. 69–88; Valerie Hébert, Disguised Resistance? The Story of Kurt Gerstein, in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 20 (2006), pp. 1–33; Helmut Franz, *Kurt Gerstein. Außenseiter des Widerstandes der Kirche gegen Hitler*, Zürich 1964; Saul Friedländer, *Kurt Gerstein ou l'ambiguïté du bien*, Paris 1967; Pierre Joffroy, *L'espion de Dieu. La passion de Kurt Gerstein*, Paris 1969; Jürgen Schäfer, *Kurt Gerstein – Zeuge des Holocaust. Ein Leben zwischen Bibelkreisen und SS*, Bielefeld 1999. Friedländer's biography appeared also in translation as *Kurt Gerstein: The Ambiguity of Good*, New York 1969 and 1983; *Counterfeit Nazi: The Ambiguity of Good*, London 1969; and *Kurt Gerstein oder die Zwiespältigkeit des Guten*, Gütersloh 1968. Joffroy's biography has been published alternatively as *A Spy for God: The Ordeal of Kurt Gerstein*, New York 1971; *Der Spion Gottes: Kurt Gerstein – ein SS-Offizier im Widerstand?*, Berlin 1995.

38 Works on the Holocaust, German Resistance and the Vatican during World War II that mention Gerstein and his report include: Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka. The Operation Reinhard Death Camps*, Bloomington/IN 1987; Lucy S. Dawidowicz (ed.), *A Holocaust Reader*, Indianapolis 1976; Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination. Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1939–1945*, New York 2008, and *Pius XII and the Third Reich: A Documentation*, New York 1980; Israel Gutman (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, New York 1990; Richard Gutteridge, *Open Thy Mouth for the Dumb! The German Evangelical Church and the Jews, 1879–1950*, Oxford 1976;

The Complicit Saboteur: I have shown elsewhere in greater detail that the most searching investigations into Gerstein's activities with the SS were carried out in connection with several postwar legal proceedings related to his life.³⁹ The evidence they produced and the judgments they pronounced represent a departure from the conclusions advanced in the representations of Gerstein discussed until now, from Rothfels to Gavras. These legal proceedings included a murder trial, a Denazification tribunal, and related rehabilitation, compensation and pension hearings. Whereas examinations by historians, biographers, film-makers and playwrights could be selective about what they emphasized or acknowledged and leave unresolved the contradictions inherent in Gerstein's unique path of resistance, these courtroom processes and the laws they interpreted could not accommodate the simultaneous roles Gerstein played: voluntary participant in the Final Solution and tortured opponent of the regime. To decide any one case meant deciding which role outweighed the other.

The first trial took place in 1948 and 1949 and charged the former manager of the Degesch Company, Dr. Gerhard Peters, with murder and being an accessory to murder for having supplied Zyklon B to Auschwitz between 1941 and 1944 knowing that it would be used to kill people. During proceedings Peters claimed that he first learned that Zyklon B was being used for murder during a conversation with Gerstein in June 1943. A side note here: Gerstein's reports make no mention of a 1943 conversation resulting in deliveries of Zyklon B. Rather, Gerstein mentions being asked to acquire Zyklon B for a second time in 1944. Aside from the mismatched dates, the evidence pertaining to both orders is the same: for instance, that Gerstein dealt with Peters, the amounts and destinations of the order, that Gerstein had the invoices made out in his name. The court concluded that the 1944 order Gerstein referred to was actually the 1943 order under consideration. Concerning that 1943 conversation, Peters insisted that Gerstein

Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3 vols., New York 1985, and *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933–1945*, New York 1992; Peter Hoffmann, *The History of the German Resistance, 1933–1945*, London 1977; Klemens von Klemperer, *The Solitary Witness: No Mere Footnote to Resistance*, in: David Clay Large (ed.), *Contending with Hitler: Varieties of German Resistance in the Third Reich*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 129–40; Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret. An Investigation into the Suppression of Information about Hitler's "Final Solution,"* London 1980; Guenter Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany*, New York 1965; Michael Phayer, *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930–1965*, Bloomington/IN 2000; Franciszek Piper, *Auschwitz, 1940–45: Central Issues in the History of the Camp*, vol. 3: *Mass Murder*, Oswiecim 2000; Susan Zuccotti, *Under his Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy*, New Haven/CT 2000.

³⁹ See Hébert, *Disguised Resistance*.

had told him that the gas was being used, on orders from Himmler, to execute criminals sentenced to death and mentally and physically incurable patients. In order to lessen their suffering, Peters added, Gerstein requested that the customary irritant present in the gas be removed. The conversation resulted in a standing monthly order of 200 kg of Zyklon B in 500 g canisters being shipped to both Auschwitz and Oranienburg. Records, including the invoices that Gerstein attached to his French report, indicated that the shipments were indeed delivered to the camps. However, Peters might still have been found not guilty if the court believed that Gerstein had succeeded in preventing this Zyklon B from being used to murder camp prisoners, as Gerstein claimed in his reports. The court accepted that Gerstein had destroyed one shipment himself by faking a truck accident. As for the gas sent to Oranienburg, some was re-routed out of the camp to an unknown destination. These quantities were removed from consideration. The amount of Zyklon B delivered to Auschwitz, however, represented enough poison to kill 450,000 people.⁴⁰

Although Gerstein insisted that none of the gas that had passed through him was ever used against people, the court concluded that this was unlikely. Gerstein had claimed that the gas was stockpiled at Auschwitz, unused, and in May 1944 he wrote a letter to Degesch in an attempt to elicit information from the company that the chemical had exceeded its shelf life and should be destroyed. (That letter was attached to the French report along with the Degesch invoices.) But it is possible, the court asserted, that the poison was used to kill people after that date. Indeed, right around that time the Allies bombed the Zyklon B manufacturing plant. This was also the period of the mass deportation of close to half a million Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz. Therefore, a shortage in the supply of Zyklon B coincided with an increased demand for it. Gerstein was not posted at Auschwitz; he could not have controlled how it was used in the camp. It was entirely plausible that the very gas that Gerstein had arranged to be delivered to Auschwitz was used in the gas chambers at Birkenau. As a result of this finding, Dr. Peters was found guilty of being an accessory to manslaughter.⁴¹

The Degesch trial verdict cast a long shadow on Gerstein's story. Although that case made no decision about any criminal status on Gerstein's part, all subsequent legal confrontations with Gerstein's story built upon the documentary evidence and court decisions generated by the previous ones. The Degesch trial conclusions fundamentally influenced the judgment in Gerstein's Denazification

⁴⁰ On the Frankfurt court's painstaking efforts to trace the Zyklon B shipments delivered in accordance with Gerstein's 1943 order, see Hébert, *Disguised Resistance*, p. 30, note 88.

⁴¹ See *Justiz und NS-Verbrechen*, vol. 13, Lfd. No. 415: *Massenvernichtungsverbrechen in Lagern*.

hearing. That tribunal found that although Gerstein had wanted to sabotage the SS's crimes, he was connected on a practical level to its murderous activities. It described him as "an important link in the chain of responsible people" and insisted that especially after Belzec, he should have cut ties with the SS in order not to be further implicated in these killings.⁴² Rothfels mentioned the Degesch case only in passing, but did refer to these very aspects of the Denazification decision. Although he said that his article "was not the place to take issue with the judgments of the tribunal," in fact he did just that. He did not accept that Gerstein would have been able to leave the SS given what he knew, and he argued that Gerstein's decision to attach the Degesch invoices to his report should be interpreted as evidence of his successful sabotage. If Gerstein had failed, he would not have exposed this particular connection to Zyklon B at Auschwitz. Rothfels then hedges a bit, saying that either way "these actions could not have changed the entire course of events." Jews would still have been murdered, with or without Gerstein's interventions.⁴³

For Rothfels, the "inner constancy" of Gerstein's intentions was what counted most. However, his commentary did not confront the full extent of Gerstein's connection to Auschwitz, the very epicenter of Nazi genocide. By contrast, the courts were obligated to account for Gerstein's actions, which however unintentionally linked him to the murders of hundreds of thousands of innocents. For years after the Denazification decision, Gerstein's widow appealed to various government ministries to recognize her husband's resistance activities and compensate her and their three children for the damage suffered in his health and in his career for his long-standing opposition to the regime dating back to the 1930s. At various points, government authorities reiterated the conclusion that, as part of the SS, Gerstein had made significant contributions to the destruction of the Jews. Ultimately out of bureaucratic exhaustion and a desire to be done with the matter, the state concluded a private settlement with Frau Gerstein granting her a pension based on Gerstein's premature dismissal from his civil service job for opposing the Nazis in the prewar period. That is, only by consciously excluding his SS membership from consideration was it able to justify granting her public funds.⁴⁴

Given recent decisions in Holocaust-related trials in Germany there is little reason to believe that a court hearing Gerstein's case today would come to a differ-

42 SAS, Bestand Wü 13: Staatskommissariat für die politische Säuberung in Württemberg-Hohenzollern, Az. 15/T/F/1035, no. 2138: State Commissariat for Political Cleansing, Denazification Tribunal, judgments with reasons, 16 November 1950.

43 Rothfels, *Eyewitness Report*, p. 71.

44 For a detailed discussion of these deliberations, see Hébert, *Disguised Resistance*, pp. 18–21.

ent judgment. The Nazis' vast machinery of death likely suffered no impediment or deficit because of Gerstein's efforts at sabotage. This conclusion shunted the fact of his intentions to the periphery of legal concern. Evidence weighed more heavily on the side of Gerstein having contributed by his continued membership in the SS to the practical implementation of the Final Solution. For most of West Germany's and reunified Germany's postwar history, the prosecution of murder cases related to the Holocaust required evidence of the suspect's malicious or cruel intent.⁴⁵ These characteristics were absent in Gerstein as well as in the majority of rank and file perpetrators. Consequently, these particular features of the law on murder had resulted, on a national scale, in a paltry record of judicial reckoning with Nazi era crime. Legal and historical scholars alike have long understood how this legal approach fundamentally undermined an authentic understanding of the crime of genocide. That is, genocide had succeeded precisely because thousands of people worked in support of the intended purpose of the death camps irrespective of their personal motivations. The Holocaust did not require individual initiative or intention; it required men and women who with their daily routines advanced the Nazi project of destruction. In 2011 a Munich court finally broke through the interpretational conventions that had hitherto prevented countless war criminals from answering for their crimes. It convicted Ivan Demjanjuk, a Ukrainian former guard at Sobibor, of assisting in the murder of over 28,000 Jews by very reason of his presence and service at the camp. Four years later, a court in Lüneburg convicted the German Oskar Gröning of assisting in the murder of 300,000 Hungarian Jews while employed as a clerk at Birkenau. His hands searched suitcases and sorted currency; they did not empty canisters of Zyklon B into the gas chambers. Nonetheless, his work was inseparable from the destructive process.

Demjanjuk and Gröning were rightly convicted not because they committed wanton murders, but because they worked in factories of death. To convict only on proof of personal viciousness is to treat the crimes of the Holocaust as acts of garden-variety villainy. [...] The verdicts understood that in judging state-sponsored atrocities, guilt is not to be measured by acts of cruelty or savagery alone; guilt follows *function*. Such was the simple, terrible, and great insight of these courts.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ On how the particularities of German law regarding accessory to and perpetration of murder and manslaughter distorted judicial confrontation with Nazi crime, see Dick de Mildt, *In the Name of the People: Perpetrators of Genocide in the Reflection of their Post-War Prosecution in West Germany. The "Euthanasia" and "Aktion Reinhardt" Trial Cases*, The Hague 1996; Katharina von Kellenbach, *Vanishing Acts: Perpetrators in Postwar Germany*, in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 17 (2003), pp. 305–29; Rebecca Wittmann, *Beyond Justice. The Auschwitz Trial*, Cambridge/MA 2005.

⁴⁶ Lawrence Douglas, *The Right Wrong Man: John Demjanjuk and the Last Great Nazi War Crimes Trial*, Princeton 2016, p. 260; italics in original.

By the same logic, Gerstein is also guilty. His function supported Auschwitz.

The Unresolvable Contradiction: One might argue that Gerstein's example is an asymmetrical match for the Demjanjuk and Gröning cases. Gerstein differed in the depth of his opposition to the regime, and in the tremendous risks he accepted in attempting to alert the world to Nazi crime. Unlike Demjanjuk and Gröning, Gerstein put himself in a position that connected him to Auschwitz in order to serve a higher purpose. He suffered because of his choice, and we, like Rothfels, may sympathize with his moral agony. But Gerstein might also have been more deeply implicated in Jewish suffering than is generally acknowledged by Rothfels and by subsequent scholarly and popular representations of his story. Therefore it does not follow that we should impose the opposite hierarchy than the courts did. We may be uncomfortable giving more weight to his actions, but that does not justify privileging his intentions. It may be that in this case it cannot be one or the other. To be more faithful to his story requires accepting Gerstein both as an accessory to murder *and* a courageous opponent of murder at the same time.

In his book *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany*, Robert Moeller shows how West Germany's selective memory and uneven focus on aspects of its recent history provided it with a "useable" past for the business of reconstruction and recovery, but short-changed the record of Germans' complicity in Nazi crime and the anguish of their victims. The Germans were responsible for starting a war and conceiving a genocide in which tens of millions perished. Still, there was no denying Germany's material ruin, symbolized by the piles of rubble where cities once stood, nor the physical and emotional wreckage caused by the Soviets' violation of millions of German women and girls and by the deaths of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans in the expulsions from the East. This too was evidence of catastrophe; this too was part of German experience. Moeller concludes that the better histories after 1945 would have resisted the uncomplicated binary of good/evil – perpetrator/victim, and would instead have acknowledged the uneasy reality that in 1940s Europe, Germans could "both suffer and cause suffering in others."⁴⁷ Viewed this way, the uneasy reality of Gerstein as both opponent and perpetrator may indeed have served as a more authentic model for Germany's engagement with contemporary history than Rothfels realized.

⁴⁷ Moeller, *War Stories*, p. 198.

Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe
Holocaust Amnesia

The Ukrainian Diaspora and the Genocide of the Jews

Introduction

Over one and a half million Ukrainian Jews fell victim to the Holocaust between the summer of 1941 and the spring of 1944. The majority of them were shot near their homes or ghettos by German *Kommandos* and local collaborators. Many Ukrainians were witnesses to this genocide or participated in the persecution and murder of their Jewish neighbors. Nonetheless, in the collective memory of the Ukrainian diaspora, which has produced an extensive body of literature, the Holocaust remained almost completely in the dark, unmentioned. Because of the inaccessibility of Soviet archives as well as a tendency among historians to concentrate on official records, this lapse in memory has not become a subject of historical research until recently. At the same time, Holocaust research focused mainly on German perpetrators and frequently refused to take notice of reports and memoirs left by survivors because of their allegedly disputed use within the historical discipline. The published works of historians such as Philip Friedman, Shmuel Spector, and Eliyahu Yones, who were themselves Holocaust survivors and who did not neglect non-German perpetrators, received little attention from German and North American specialists of Ukrainian history and scholars of National Socialism. Only in recent years has a scholarly debate turned its attention to this blind spot in the memory of the Ukrainian diaspora and to the narrative that was constructed by it.¹

1 For essays that cover the subject of memory and the Ukrainian diaspora and its handling of the Holocaust, see John-Paul Himka, *The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Ukraine*, in: John-Paul Himka/Joanna Beata Michlic (eds.), *Bringing the Dark Past to Light. The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, Lincoln 2013, pp. 626–53; John-Paul Himka, *A Central European Diaspora under the Shadow of World War II: The Galician Ukrainians in North America*, in: *Austrian History Yearbook* 37 (2006), pp. 17–31; Per Anders Rudling, *Multiculturalism, Memory, and Ritualization: Ukrainian Nationalist Monuments in Edmonton, Alberta*, in: *Nationalities Papers* 39 (2011) no. 5, pp. 733–68; idem, *The OUN, the UPA and the Holocaust: A Study in the Manufacturing of Historical Myths*, *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies* no. 2107 (Pittsburg: The Center for Russian and East European Studies, 2011); Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, *Celebrating Fascism and War Criminality in Edmonton. The Political Myth and Cult of Stepan Bandera in Multicultural Canada*, in: *Kakanien Revisited* 12 (2010), pp. 1–16; idem,

Because of personal experiences and firsthand knowledge, the genocide of the Jews was present in the personal memories of Ukrainian exiles from the beginning. In the spring and summer of 1944, 120,000 Ukrainians who had been either witnesses to, collaborators in, or perpetrators of the extermination of their Jewish neighbors, retreated with German soldiers and administrative functionaries. However, during the Cold War, the Holocaust was only openly discussed in émigré communities when specific people were prosecuted on account of real or suspected war crimes, or when Soviet propaganda branded Ukrainians living in exile as collaborators. In the more typical and numerous accounts of the Second World War that were compiled by different groups in the Ukrainian diaspora, the extermination of Jews was hardly mentioned. When it was in fact mentioned, it was usually introduced as a side episode of German history that had not involved the Ukrainian people. The Ukrainian people were instead depicted as victims of the German and Soviet regimes, while Ukrainian nationalists were portrayed as heroes who fought against the German and Soviet occupying forces for the sake of national independence. This narrative was partially or completely adopted by professional historians, who taught mainly at leading North American universities.²

This essay will provide a brief outline of the Holocaust in Ukraine while also discussing the participation of Ukrainians in the genocide of the Jewish people. In doing so, it will concentrate on western Ukraine (eastern Galicia and Volhynia), where, in contrast to central, southern, and eastern Ukraine, more Jews lived and more were murdered. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (*Orhanizatsiia Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv*, OUN) was also based in eastern Galicia and Volhynia, as was its military arm, established in early 1943, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (*Ukraïns'ka Povstans'ka Armiiia*, UPA). Their participation in the Holocaust is particularly interesting given that their relationship with Nazi Germany was at times openly hostile. It will be discussed below why and under what circumstances Ukrainians were forcibly or voluntarily moved during the course of the Second World War to Germany, where after the war some of them lived in Displaced

Debating, Obfuscating and Disciplining the Holocaust: Post-Soviet Historical Discourses on the OUN-UPA and other Nationalist Movements, in: *East European Jewish Affairs* 42 (2012) no. 3, pp. 199–241. For historical scholarship on survivors, see Philip Friedman, *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations during the Nazi Occupation*, in: Philip Friedman/Ada June Friedman/Salo Baron (eds.), *Roads to Extinction*, New York 1980, pp. 176–208; Shmuel Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews 1941–1944*, Jerusalem 1990; Eliyahu Yones, *Smoke in the Sand: The Jews of Lvov in the War Years 1939–1944*, Jerusalem 2004. – I would like to thank the Fritz Thyssen Foundation for supporting the research that went into this study.

² See Rudling, *The OUN, the UPA and the Holocaust*, pp. 19–20; Rossoliński-Liebe, *Debating, Obfuscating and Disciplining the Holocaust*, p. 205.

Persons (DP) camps. Some of them were later relocated to various countries in the West, where they established political-cultural associations for children, youths, and adults, political organizations, holiday camps that specialized in advancing the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism, as well as publishing houses and newspapers. Together, these activities were used to shape the self-image of the Ukrainian diaspora with lasting effect. The principle part of this article will examine the two most important phases during which the Ukrainian diaspora's memory of the Second World War and the Holocaust were constructed. The early construction of memory that developed during the latter stages of the Second World War and the early stages of the Cold War will be covered first. In this period, a narrative was established that would be adapted and readapted to suit political circumstances during the course of the Cold War. However, at no point did this narrative lose its semantic core or its ideological orientation. Thereafter, different forms of memory will be presented that developed in the later stages of the Cold War, primarily during the 1980s. The essay will examine the memory of the 1960s and 1970s only in passing, instead switching back and forth between the early and late phases of the Cold War so as to show, first, how durable and enduring the memory that was developed at the end of the Second World War truly was, and second, how, after two decades of stagnation, this narrative returned to a central place in the life of the diaspora, blossoming into powerful forms of memory and ritual.

The Holocaust in Western Ukraine

In contrast to Western Europe, in Ukraine the extermination of Jews was usually carried out in the open. The majority of Ukrainian Jews were killed in the immediate vicinity of their homes, not transported into the unknown in trains. It was above all in western Ukraine where non-Jewish locals perceived the Holocaust, given that their Jewish neighbors were, before their very eyes, murdered during pogroms, relocated to Ghettos (in which case local Ukrainians frequently faced pleas from Jews to watch over their property), killed in one of the many mass shootings near their homes, or massacred shortly before the arrival of the Red Army during the final stages of the Holocaust by the Germans, the Ukrainian police, or local peasants in forests or other places where the Jews had been hiding.

At the time of Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, 2.7 million Jews lived in the territory that today constitutes the Ukrainian state.³ Of these, approximately 1.6 million were murdered, either by Germans and their collaborators, or by Ukrainians working independently of the German occupying forces. Roughly 100,000 Jews survived the Holocaust in hiding, while approximately 900,000 Jews, predominantly those living in eastern Ukraine, fled with the Red Army into the interior of the Soviet Union during the opening stages of the war, thereby managing to save themselves. The majority of Jews in Ukraine who were killed stemmed from the western parts of the country, especially eastern Galicia and Volhynia, which were the regions with the highest Jewish population density. They constituted about ten percent of the total population there, and had little chance to flee from the Germans. In 1939, approximately 157,490 Poles, 99,595 Jews, and 49,747 Ukrainians lived in Lviv (Lemberg). After the beginning of the Second World War, the number of Jews living in Lviv rose to 160,000.⁴

To gain a better understanding of the memory of the Holocaust in the Ukrainian diaspora, it is necessary to examine how the genocide of the Jews unfolded in eastern Galicia and Volhynia. Thousands of political refugees, including collaborators (journalists, civil administrators, police) and members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists fled into these territories in the face of the advancing Red Army in the spring and summer of 1944. After the war, these people remained in DP camps in Germany and Austria, and then in the late 1940s and early 1950s they were resettled in Australia, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States, where they decisively shaped Ukrainian political discourse on the Holocaust and the Second World War. In order to explain the Holocaust in Volhynia and eastern Galicia, and also to explain Ukrainian participation in the Holocaust in those areas, a brief overview of the social and political circumstances that prevailed in these regions before and during the Second World War is in order.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Poland-Lithuania was divided by Prussia, Austria, and Russia, and with that, Volhynia was incorporated into the Russian Empire, which existed until 1917, and where eighty percent of all Ukrainians lived. The remaining twenty percent of all Ukrainians lived in eastern Galicia and in Bukovina, which were part of the Habsburg Empire. In November 1917,

³ 2.47 million lived in the regions of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. See Alexander Kruglov, *Jewish Losses in Ukraine, 1941–1944*, in: Ray Brandon/Wendy Lower (eds.), *The Shoah in Ukraine. History, Testimony, Memorialization*, Bloomington/IN 2008, p. 273.

⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 273 and pp. 285–86; Christoph Mick, *Kriegserfahrungen in einer multiethnischen Stadt: Lemberg 1914–1947*, Wiesbaden 2010, p. 499; Grzegorz Mazur, *Życie polityczne polskiego Lwowa 1918–1939*, Cracow 2007, p. 23.

Ukrainians declared an independent Ukrainian state in Kiev, and a second in Lviv. Neither of these states were able to defend themselves from stronger neighbors, namely Poland and Russia. Since the Ukrainians had sided with the Germans during the First World War, and because almost nobody officially recognized a Ukrainian state, Ukrainian politicians found little support at the Paris peace talks in January 1919.⁵ Volhynia and eastern Galicia were handed over to the Second Polish Republic, while most of the remaining Ukrainian regions became part of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.⁶

The Ukrainian nationalist independence movement was concentrated in eastern Galicia and Volhynia, and clung to the idea of national self-determination during the interwar period. The principal leaders of this movement – many of whom were veterans of the First World War – began by founding the Ukrainian Military Organization (*Ukrain's'ka Viis'kova Orhanizatsiia*, UVO) in Prague in 1920, and then the OUN in Vienna in 1929.⁷ The OUN in particular bore similarities to radical nationalist and fascist movements such as the Croatian Ustaša, the Slovakian Hlinka Party, or the Romanian Iron Guard. They focused their efforts above all on youths and mobilized Ukrainians for a ruthless struggle for national freedom. They radicalized a Ukrainian nationalism that had, until the First World War, been otherwise strongly influenced by socialist ideas, pushing it more into a fascist, racist, and antisemitic direction. The ethnically nationalist politics of Poland, which treated Ukrainians and other minorities as second-class citizens, only strengthened the conflict between Poland and Ukrainians and ensured that the OUN would use various means of terrorism and mass violence in order to “liberate” Ukraine and establish a Ukrainian state to the exclusion of other ethnic minorities.⁸

5 For the proclamation of the state in Kiev and Lviv, see Rudolf A. Mark, *Die gescheiterten Staatsversuche*, in: Frank Golczewski (ed.), *Geschichte der Ukraine*, Göttingen 1993, pp. 177–79; Frank Golczewski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer 1914–1939*, Paderborn 2010, pp. 240, 264, 270–71, 362–63, 383–84. For the Paris peace talks, see the same, pp. 344, 347, 366–69.

6 In the period between both world wars, approximately 26 million Ukrainians lived in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, ca. 5 million lived in the Second Polish Republic, ca. 0.8 million in Greater Romania, and ca. 0.5 million in Czechoslovakia. See Jarosław Hrycak, *Historia Ukrainy 1772–1999: Narodziny nowoczesnego narodu*, Lublin 2000, p. 173, 188.

7 See Golczewski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer*, pp. 547–57.

8 Also see Alexander Prusin, *Revolution and Ethnic Cleansing in Western Ukraine: The OUN-UPA Assault against Polish Settlements in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia, 1943–1944*, in: Steven Béla Várdy/T. Hunt Tooley (eds.), *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe*, New York 2003, pp. 518–20; Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, *The “Ukrainian National Revolution” of Summer 1941*, in: *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12 (2011) no. 1, pp. 85–89; Franziska Bruder, “Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen oder sterben!” *Die Organisation Ukrainischer Natio-*

From the beginning, the membership of the OUN comprised two distinct generations, which, by the 1930s, had led to conflict within the organization. By 1940, this conflict had resulted in the OUN dividing into two camps, the OUN-M (led by Andrii Mel'nyk, the older generation) and the OUN-B (led by Stepan Bandera, the younger generation). Both factions worked together with organs of the National Socialist state, especially the *Abwehr*. They were involved in preparations for the invasion of the Soviet Union, and planned, upon its demise, to create a Ukrainian state. The leadership of the OUN-B hoped that the Germans would accept their state, just as they had accepted the creation of the Slovakian state in March 1939, and the Croatian state in April 1941. On 30 June 1941, eight days after the invasion of the Soviet Union, one of the leading members of the OUN-B, Iaroslav Stets'ko, proclaimed the Ukrainian state in the capital of western Ukraine, the city of Lviv. As had been the case with Lithuania, where activists had proclaimed the creation of a Lithuanian state, this declaration of statehood was not recognized by Hitler. To the contrary, leaders of the OUN-B were arrested and brought to Berlin, where they were held under house arrest by the German secret police and were later incarcerated as special prisoners (*Sonderhäftlinge*) in Berlin and Sachsenhausen. In addition to these arrests, the Germans rounded up several hundred less prominent OUN-B members and placed them in various German concentration camps as political prisoners. In September 1944, the leadership of the OUN was released to mobilize Ukrainians for a renewed collaboration with Germany against the Soviet Union.⁹

The Holocaust in eastern Galicia and Volhynia, as in other Ukrainian territories, unfolded in four phases, which were, however, not identical in eastern Galicia and Volhynia, as these territories were located in different administrative districts, and the Jews who lived in these territories were exposed to different policies of extermination. Eastern Galicia was placed under the General Government and organized as the district of Galicia, while Volhynia came under the control of *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*. On 22 June 1941, the first phase of the Holocaust in these territories began when at least 140 pogroms broke out, resulting in the murder of thirteen to thirty-five thousand Jews. In the largest pogrom, in Lviv,

nalisten (OUN) 1929–1948, Berlin 2007, pp. 32–51; Golczewski, *Deutsche und Ukrainer*, pp. 571–91; Marco Carynnyk, *Foes of Our Rebirth: Ukrainian Nationalist Discussions about Jews, 1929–1947*, in: *Nationalities Papers* 39 (2011) no. 3, pp. 315–52.

⁹ See Rossoliński-Liebe, *Ukrainian National Revolution*, pp. 92–106; Prusin, *Revolution and Ethnic Cleansing in Western Ukraine*, in: Várdu/Tooley (eds.), *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe*, pp. 522–23; Bruder, *Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen*, pp. 118–50; Adam Cyra, *Banderowcy w KL Auschwitz*, in: *Studia nad faszyzmem i zbrodniami hitlerowskimi* 30 (2008), pp. 388–402.

which began around ten o'clock at night, just a few hours before the proclamation of the Ukrainian state, four thousand Jews were killed. The perpetrators of this pogrom consisted of the militia of the OUN-B, which worked together with the Germans, groups of local civilians, as well as various German units, including some from the *Wehrmacht*.¹⁰ The second phase overlapped with the first as the *Einsatzkommandos* of the *Einsatzgruppe C* began to conduct mass shootings. Up until the end of 1941, approximately 50,000 Jews in eastern Galicia and 20,000 Jews in Volhynia were executed in mass shootings. The *Einsatzkommandos* were supported by local OUN militias, which had been transformed into the Ukrainian police in August of that year.¹¹

The Ukrainian police played a very important role in the third phase of the Holocaust, during which most of the Jews in eastern Galicia and Volhynia were killed. This phase played out differently in the General Government and the *Reichskommissariat Ukraine*, although both territories saw Jews first being pushed into ghettos. For Volhynia, the “Final Solution” had already been com-

10 For the total number of pogroms, see Kai Struve, Rites of Violence? The Pogroms of Summer 1941, in: Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry 24 (2012), p. 268. For the number of victims, see Dieter Pohl, Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Western Ukraine, in: Elazar Barkan/Elizabeth A. Cole/Kai Struve (eds.), Shared History – Divided Memory: Jews and Others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939–1941, Leipzig 2007, p. 306. For an overview of those who perpetrated the pogrom in Lviv, see John-Paul Himka, The Lviv Pogrom of 1941: The Germans, Ukrainian Nationalists, and the Carnival Crowd, in: Canadian Slavonic Papers LIII (2011) nos. 2–4, p. 243. On the Lviv pogrom, also see Christoph Mick, Incompatible Experiences: Poles, Ukrainians and Jews in Lviv under Soviet and German Occupation, 1939–44, in: Journal of Contemporary History 46 (2011), pp. 336–63; Hannes Heer, Einübung in den Holocaust: Lemberg Juni/Juli 1941, in: Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft 49 (2001), pp. 409–27. On the pogroms in general in Ukraine, see Omer Bartov, Wartime Lies and Other Testimonies: Jewish-Christian Relations in Buczacz, 1939–1944, in: East European Politics and Societies 25 (2011) no. 3, pp. 486–511; Wendy Lower, Pogroms, mob violence and genocide in western Ukraine, summer 1941: varied histories, explanations and comparisons, in: Journal of Genocide Research 13 (2011) no. 3, pp. 217–46; Struve, Rites of Violence, pp. 257–74; Frank Golczewski, Shades of Grey: Reflections on Jewish-Ukrainian and German-Ukrainian Relations in Galicia, in: Brandon/Lower (eds.), The Shoah in Ukraine, pp. 114–55; Timothy Snyder, The Life and Death of Western Volhynian Jewry, 1921–1945, in: Brandon/Lower (eds.), The Shoah in Ukraine, pp. 77–113; Pohl, Anti-Jewish Pogroms, in: Barkan/Cole/Struve (eds.), Shared History – Divided Memory, pp. 305–13; Bernd Boll, Zloczow, Juli 1941: Die Wehrmacht und der Beginn des Holocaust in Galizien, in: Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft 50 (2002), pp. 899–917.

11 See Kruglov, Jewish Losses in Ukraine, in: Brandon/Lower (eds.), The Shoah in Ukraine, p. 278; Dieter Pohl, Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien. Organisation und Durchführung eines staatlichen Massenverbrechens, Munich 1997, pp. 67–71; Spector, The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews, p. 79; Snyder, The Life and Death of Western Volhynian Jewry, in: Brandon/Lower (eds.), The Shoah in Ukraine, p. 92.

pleted by the end of 1942, for eastern Galicia by the summer of 1943. Of approximately 570,000 Jews who had lived in the District of Galicia shortly before the invasion of the Soviet Union, over 200,000 were transported to the Bełżec extermination camp during this phase, around 150,000 were shot in the vicinity of the ghettos or in nearby forests, and roughly 80,000 died in the ghettos or in work camps.¹² By contrast, in Volhynia, almost none of the Jews were deported to extermination camps. Rather, almost all of them (ca. 200,000 of the 250,000 that lived there until June 1941) were shot before mass graves in the vicinity of the ghettos or in local forests.¹³ The chief perpetrators in this phase consisted of various German units, but also included the Ukrainian Auxiliary Police. The members of the latter did not assume a leading role, but participated in considerably larger numbers than the Germans, and indeed, their collaboration made the Jewish genocide in Ukraine technically and logistically possible.¹⁴

During the fourth and final phase of the Holocaust, the remaining ten percent of west Ukrainian Jews, that is, about 57,000 in eastern Galicia and 25,000 in Volhynia, fought for their survival. These were people who had fled from the ghettos, work camps, and transports, and had hidden in forests, with peasants in the countryside, or in the cities, or those who attempted to survive by joining up with Soviet partisans.¹⁵ Only about 15,000 Jews actually succeeded in surviving in the western Ukraine.¹⁶ During this phase, Jews were hunted down and killed by the Germans, Ukrainian police, locals, and starting in early 1943, by the OUN-B's Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). In April 1943, five thousand men deserted the Ukrainian police in Volhynia and joined the UPA. Most of these men had been

12 See Kruglov, *Jewish Losses in Ukraine*, in: Brandon/Lower (eds.), *The Shoah in Ukraine*, pp. 280–83; Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien*, pp. 139–262.

13 See Kruglov, *Jewish Losses in Ukraine*, in: Brandon/Lower (eds.), *The Shoah in Ukraine*, pp. 280–81; Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews*, pp. 116–87; Snyder, *The Life and Death of Western Volhynian Jewry*, in: Brandon/Lower (eds.), *The Shoah in Ukraine*, pp. 96–97.

14 For more on the mass shootings and the role of the Ukrainian police, see Frank Golczewski, *Die Kollaboration in der Ukraine*, in: Christoph Dieckmann/Babette Quinkert/Tatjana Tönsmeier (eds.), *Kooperation und Verbrechen. Formen der "Kollaboration" im östlichen Europa 1939–1945*, Göttingen 2003, pp. 171–76; Gabriel Finder/Alexander Prusin, *Collaboration in Eastern Galicia: The Ukrainian Police and the Holocaust*, in: *East European Jewish Affairs* 34 (2004) no. 2, pp. 95–111; Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien*; Snyder, *The Life and Death of Western Volhynian Jewry*, in: Brandon/Lower (eds.), *The Shoah in Ukraine*, pp. 89–104.

15 See Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien*, p. 385; Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews*, pp. 357–58.

16 See Bruder, *Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen*, pp. 217–23; Bartov, *Wartime Lies and Other Testimonies*, pp. 491–98; Friedman, *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations*, in: Friedman/Friedman/Baron (eds.), *Roads to Extinction*, pp. 187–89.

involved in the Holocaust and they were familiar with the process of exterminating an entire ethnic group in a region during a short period of time.¹⁷ The UPA was fighting for an independent Ukraine that was to take the form of an ethnically homogenous and authoritarian nation state of a fascist type. Its members hunted Jews who had survived in hiding while also massacring Polish residents of western Ukraine. In a wave of “ethnic cleansing” that took place in Volhynia and eastern Galicia in 1943, between 70,000 and 100,000 Polish civilians were murdered by the UPA.¹⁸

There were other groups besides the OUN, the UPA, and their numerous sympathizers that took part in the Jewish genocide. Ukrainian intellectuals were at least indirectly involved in the Holocaust, given that they wrote articles for collaborationist newspapers such as the *L'vivs 'ki visti* (*Lviv News*), *Krakivs'ki visti* (*Cracow News*), or the *Ukraïns'ki shchodenni visti* (*Ukrainian Daily News*), which drummed up public support for the war against the Soviet Union and propagated antisemitic stereotypes.¹⁹ The Ukrainian Central Committee, which was established in Cracow in November 1939, and mainly worked together under the leadership of Volodymyr Kubiiiovych with the OUN-M, helped the Germans not only to “Aryanize” Jewish properties, but also to establish the *Waffen-SS* division “Galicia” together with the Germans. Formed in order to fight against the Red Army, this division of Ukrainians initially numbered eight thousand men. Later, it would be merged with *Schutzmannschaften* (Auxiliary Police) and other units, bringing its numbers to 14,000.²⁰ In sum, it should be noted that various cultural, social, and political groups were involved in the Holocaust in western Ukraine, including peasants, fanatical “freedom fighters,” and also intellectuals. Some groups worked together with the Germans, while others, such as the OUN and UPA, persecuted and murdered Jews on their own initiative. The spectrum

17 See Grzegorz Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka 1942–1960. Działalność Organizacji Ukraińskich Nacjonalistów i Ukraińskiej Powstańczej Armii*, Warsaw 2006, p. 194; Timothy Snyder, *The Causes of Ukrainian-Polish Ethnic Cleansing 1943*, in: *Past and Present* 179 (2003), pp. 211–12; FINDER/Prusin, *Collaboration in Eastern Galicia*, p. 108.

18 See Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka*, pp. 410–12, 298–400; Prusin, *Revolution and Ethnic Cleansing in Western Ukraine*, in: Várdy/Tooley (eds.), *Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe*, pp. 523–35.

19 See John-Paul Himka, *Krakivski visti and the Jews, 1943: A Contribution to the History of Ukrainian-Jewish Relations during the Second World War*, in: *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 21 (1996) nos. 1–2, pp. 81–95; Golczewski, *Shades of Grey*, in: Brandon/Lower (eds.), *The Shoah in Ukraine*, p. 134.

20 See *ibid.*, pp. 133–38.

of factors that motivated Ukrainians was broad and included ideological as well material motives.

The Emigration of Witnesses and Perpetrators

As the Red Army pushed the Germans out of Ukraine in 1944, roughly 120,000 Ukrainians fled the country as well. Most of those who fled were people who feared the Soviets for political reasons. Among them were members of the police forces, civil servants, members of the Ukrainian Central Committee, intellectuals who had written for the newspapers of the occupying forces, and also members of the OUN and UPA partisan groups. After the war, these political exiles remained in Germany and Austria in DP camps. Together, they numbered approximately 250,000 Ukrainians, including forced laborers who had been shipped to Germany during the war and who wished to avoid being sent back to the Soviet Union. Leading OUN-B members, who had been shipped to concentration camps as political prisoners, and who found one another again in the DP camps, reorganized the structures of the OUN in exile. Roughly 11,000 soldiers of the *Waffen-SS* Division “Galicia” who had surrendered to British forces also avoided being repatriated to the Soviet Union. In a number of Ukrainian DP camps, people who were accused of working together with the Soviet Union were murdered by the OUN. Given their mutual interest in combating communism and Soviet intelligence, American intelligence agencies often cooperated in these acts. Torture cellars were also set up where OUN activists interrogated suspected individuals. There were rumors that “traitors” were disposed of by cremation. A reliable figure for people who were murdered during this period does not exist; estimates place the number at under one hundred.²¹

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and the International Refugee Organization resettled Ukrainian

²¹ See Katrin Boeckh, *Stalinismus in der Ukraine: Die Rekonstruktion des sowjetischen Systems nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Wiesbaden 2007, p. 293; Howard Margolian, *Unauthorized Entry. The Truth about Nazi War Criminals in Canada, 1946–1956*, Toronto 2000, pp. 131–32, 135, 146; Julia Lalonde, “Building a Home Abroad” – A Comparative Study of Ukrainian Migration, Immigration Policy and Diaspora Formation in Canada and Germany after the World War II, Diss., Hamburg 2006, pp. 149–53. For the acts of violence committed in the DP camps, see Bruder, *Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen*, p. 249; Bundesarchiv Koblenz, B 362/10137, 272, *Voruntersuchung gegen Bogdan Staschynskij*, May 22, 1962; Stephen Dorril, MI6. *Inside the Covert World of Her Majesty’s Secret Intelligence Service*, New York 2002, pp. 234–45.

DPs, including veterans of the *Waffen-SS* Division “Galicia” and members of the OUN, in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States. Several thousand Ukrainians remained in Germany and Austria, among them the leadership and numerous members of the OUN, who, with the help of the CIA, established their new headquarters in Munich. At first, it was located at Lindwurmstraße 205, and then, after 1954, at Zeppelinstraße 67, where today, a plaque donated by Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko honors the “freedom fighter” Iaroslav Stets’ko and his wife.²² In their new countries, the resettled Ukrainian DPs stumbled upon already existing groups of the Ukrainian diaspora, which, in Canada for example, had already been there since the late nineteenth century. Since the resettled DPs were more strongly shaped by the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism, were more politically active, and were better educated than those Ukrainians who had already lived abroad for decades, the new émigrés often assumed leading roles in associations and organizations in their new countries. Subsequently they brought these institutions into line with their nationalist ideology, and set up structures for numerous nationalist youth organizations.²³

An important medium through which the resettled DPs were able to publish their own memories, and with which they were able to influence the groups that had settled abroad before them, was newspapers. Three very important newspapers that were controlled by veterans of the OUN-B were the *Homin Ukraïny* (*The Sound of Ukraine*) in Toronto, the *Ukrains’ka dumka* (*The Ukrainian Idea*) in London, and the *Shliakh peremohy* (*The Road to Victory*) in Munich. To these were later added in London the newspapers *ABN Correspondence* and *Liberation Path*. The political émigrés also founded publishing companies in Germany, Great Britain, Canada, the United States, and in other countries, in which countless memoirs and histories of the OUN, the UPA, and the Second World War were published, mostly in Ukrainian. As a way of preparing their children for the future struggle for Ukrainian independence, the activists of the Ukrainian diaspora created various cultural and political organizations for Ukrainian youth, and organized vacation camps in which the younger generations could be schooled in Ukrainian nationalist ideology. Despite their geographical dispersion, the radical seg-

²² See Vic Satzewich, *The Ukrainian Diaspora*, London/New York 2002, pp. 89, 101; Dorril, MI6, pp. 240–41; Margolian, Unauthorized Entry, pp. 131–32, 135, 146; Lalande, Building, pp. 149–53; Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera: The Life and Afterlife of a Ukrainian Nationalist. Fascism, Genocide, and Cult*, Stuttgart 2014.

²³ See Himka, *A Central European Diaspora*, p. 18; Satzewich, *Ukrainian Diaspora*, p. 105.

ments of the Ukrainian diaspora in particular built a well connected transnational community of memory that developed and cultivated a narrative shaped by a number of commemorative strategies.²⁴

Early Constructions of Memory

The non-remembering of the Holocaust in Ukraine, and an active remembering of Ukrainian resistance against National Socialist Germany, were established by OUN-B propaganda already during the Second World War. Decisive in this regard was the insight that Germany would lose the war, as well as the conviction that Ukrainian nationalists would have to unite with Great Britain and the United States in order to fight against the Soviet Union. In late October 1943, local UPA leaders gave the order to produce documents confirming that the Germans had carried out the pogroms of 1941 without the assistance of the Ukrainian militia, and that the pogroms had instead been organized by the Poles, who then participated in them.²⁵ In a similar fashion, the OUN-B presented itself in numerous brochures and newspapers as a liberation movement that was both equally anti-German and anti-Soviet, even after the spring of 1944, when it again began to work together with Nazi Germany. After the Red Army had occupied western Ukraine for the second time in the summer of 1944, the underground of the OUN-UPA continued to print and distribute such material up to the end of its existence in the early 1950s.²⁶ Some of these publications dealt with the Second World War and the struggle of the Ukrainian nationalists. Jews were not mentioned in these publications. They only appeared in indirect references and claims, such as the asser-

²⁴ See Himka, *A Central European Diaspora*, p. 18; Rossoliński-Liebe, *Celebrating Fascism*, pp. 3–4; Satzewich, *Ukrainian Diaspora*, p. 105.

²⁵ Nakaz Ch. 2/43, Oblasnym, okruzhnym i povitovym providnykam do vykonannia, in: *Tsentrāl'nyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchych orhaniv vlady ta upravlinnia Ukrainy/Central State Archives of Supreme Bodies of Power and Government of Ukraine* (henceforward: TsDAVOV), f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 43, 9. Also see Bruder, *Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen*, p. 222; Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka*, p. 290; Anatolii Rusnachenko, *Narod zburenyi: Natsional'no-vyzvol'nyi rukh v Ukraïni i natsional'ni rukhy oporu v Bilorusii, Lytvi, Estnii u 1940–50-xh rokakh*, Kiev 2002, p. 136.

²⁶ Also see Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka*, pp. 231–34; for the flyers, see, for example, the collection in: *Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii* (RGASPI), f. 17 (Tsentrāl'nyi Komitet KPSS), op. 125, spr. 338. For a general overview of OUN and UPA propaganda, see Oleksandra Stasiuk, *Vydavnycho-propahandyvna diial'nist' OUN*, Lviv 2006.

tion that the OUN had never distributed antisemitic propaganda,²⁷ or in the form of requests to, and threats against, Holocaust survivors not to fraternize with the “Muscovite-Bolshevik imperialists.”²⁸

Early memory of the Holocaust was similarly fashioned by OUN members who had fled Ukraine with the Germans, or even earlier, in order to take up contact with the Allies. The Second World War became an important element of the memory of this group for two reasons. First, the Ukrainian DPs were charged with having collaborated with the Germans during the war and with supporting Hitler’s policies in Ukraine. Second, Ukraine was occupied by the Soviet Union, and a heroic narrative was needed to mobilize émigrés and their children to continue the struggle. Already in 1946, Mykola Lebed, the head of OUN-B intelligence (Sluzhba Bezpeky, SB), who had assumed overall command of the OUN-B after Bandera’s arrest, published a book in Rome about Ukrainian nationalists and the Second World War.²⁹ Lebed presented the OUN and the UPA as an anti-German and anti-Soviet movement of freedom fighters, saying nothing about ethnic or political violence that the OUN and UPA had carried out during the war. According to him, a number of Jews had survived within the ranks of the UPA, and other ethnic minorities had been treated kindly and civilly. Furthermore, he stressed that many Jews, when presented with the chance to join the Red Army, chose to remain with the UPA, and indeed, that many Jews had died “a heroic death” in the struggle for Ukrainian independence.³⁰

Lebed mentioned no documents or evidence that could point to antisemitism within the OUN-B and UPA. One such document indicates otherwise, however, an order that Lebed possibly issued personally as chief of OUN-B intelligence: “All Jewish non-professionals [no doctors, nurses, tailors, cobblers] should be secretly eliminated so that neither [other] Jews nor our people will know. The rumor should be spread that they went to the Bolsheviks.”³¹ At only one point does this leading member of the OUN-B hint at the UPA-orchestrated “ethnic cleansing” of

²⁷ See Carynnyk, *Foes of Our Rebirth*, p. 345.

²⁸ Volodymyr V’iatrovych, *Stavlennia OUN do ievreiv: Formuvannia pozytsii na tli katastrofy*, Lviv 2006, p. 139.

²⁹ See Mykola Lebed, *UPA, Ukraïns’ka Povstans’ka Armiia: ïi heneza, rist i diï u vyzvol’nii borotbi Ukraïns’koho narodu za Ukraïns’ku samostiïnu sobornu derzhavu*, Presove biuro UHVR, Rome 1946.

³⁰ Mykola Lebed, *UPA, Ukraïns’ka Povstans’ka Armiia*, Munich 1987, p. 69.

³¹ P. Sokhan (ed.), *Dovidka YShPR pro posylennia vyshkolu kadriv UPA, aktyvizatsiu diial’nosti zahoniv Ukraïns’kykh povstantsiv proty partyzaniv i poliakiv*, in *Litopys UPA*, vol. 4, Kiev 2002, Document 44, p. 126; also see Alexander Statiev, *The Soviet Counterinsurgency in Western Borderlands*, Cambridge 2010, p. 85.

Poles that took place between 1943 and 1944, writing that “we issued the order to the Poles to leave the territories that were important for UPA actions. When that had no effect, their resistance was liquidated by force.”³²

We find a similar, though more victimization-oriented, picture of Jewish-Ukrainian relations during the Second World War in the sixty-seven page publication, *Why is the World Silent?*, written by two [former] Ukrainian concentration camp prisoners, and published in 1945 or 1946. The authors do not see the Jews as prisoners in German camps. The only Jews who appear in their book are capos. Both of the anonymous authors present the Ukrainian prisoners as either “patriots” or “traitors,” asserting that the Ukrainian patriots were the primary victims of Germany’s policies of annihilation, and that, in addition to this, they were also persecuted by other Polish, Russian, and Soviet prisoners.³³

Silence about the Jews and the genocide committed against them was a central element in the Ukrainian diaspora’s early memory discourses on the Second World War. Neither the press of the Ukrainian nationalist underground inside Ukraine nor the émigrés themselves alluded to Ukrainian participation in the Holocaust, and this despite the fact that they published, both during the conflict and afterwards, a great deal about the Second World War and about the struggle of the Ukrainian nationalists in particular. In addition, descriptions of the events and transformations in which Ukrainians suffered after 1914 were integrated and presented in detail alongside the “heroic” struggle of the UPA against the German and Soviet occupying forces. Moreover, it was often speculated whether Ukraine could be freed with nuclear weapons. One source that provides a good glimpse into this discourse is the newspaper of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (*Ukrain’s’ka Holovna Vyzvol’na Rada*, UHVR), *Do zbroï*, which was founded by the OUN-B and the UPA in July 1944 in order to establish contact with Great Britain and the United States, and to represent the voice of Ukrainian nationalists abroad.³⁴

Thus, for example, in the second issue of *Do zbroï*, I. Stepaniv discussed using the atomic bomb for the purpose of the national liberation struggle. He described the advantages and disadvantages of this weapon, regretting that its destructive power was too weak to set off a revolution in the Soviet Union.³⁵ In the same issue, crimes committed by Polish units against Ukrainians living in Poland

³² Lebed, *Ukrain’s’ka Povstans’ka Armiia*, p. 89.

³³ See V-K., A.-T., *Chomu svit movchyt’*, Kiev/Paris 1946, pp. 4, 27, 35–36, 39, 41, 46, 48, 51.

³⁴ On the UHVR, see Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka*, pp. 130–35.

³⁵ See I. Stepaniv, *Atomova Bomba i Maibutnia taktyka*, in: *Do zbroï* 2 (1946), p. 7.

were described in detail,³⁶ as were the various struggles between the UPA and units of the Soviet People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (*Narodnyi komisariat vnutrennikh del*, NKVD), the Polish Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*, AK), and the Polish Citizens' Militia (*Milicja Obywatelska*, MO).³⁷ Another issue of *Do zbroi* went into great detail about the economic circumstances that led to the creation of the UPA.³⁸ In all of the issues published between 1946 and 1954, neither the ethnic and political violence committed by the OUN and the UPA, nor their participation in the Holocaust were mentioned.³⁹

In 1946, Volodymyr Makar published an additional book under the pseudonym, Marko Vira, titled *Seven Years of the Liberation Struggle* (*Sim lit vyzvol'nykh zmahan'*). As in Lebed's book, and typical of the nationalist perspective and early memory, all forms of mass violence perpetrated by Ukrainian nationalists during the war are left out. Just as typically, those crimes committed by Ukrainian opponents are exaggerated. Makar claims, for example, that roughly twenty million Ukrainians were starved or murdered during the interwar years as a direct result of Soviet policies. However, when describing events that took place after 22 June 1941, he is silent about any cooperation that took place between the Germans and the OUN-B. Instead, he asserts that the Germans needed no assistance from the Ukrainians, and that the Ukrainians would not have worked together with the Germans because their movement was founded on the principle of national self-reliance. Instead, the Ukrainian state was proclaimed on 30 June by the OUN-B because it reflected the "will of the nation." When describing the events of 30 June and other acts of the OUN-B during this period, he not only remains silent about Ukrainian participation in pogroms, he actually does not even mention the pogroms at all, and this despite elaborate descriptions of how and why young Ukrainians joined the Ukrainian militia that had been organized by the OUN-B, and how the OUN-B, with the help of the local supporters, had attempted to build up the structures of a state.⁴⁰

Furthermore, Makar describes German wartime atrocities in Ukraine in detail. Indeed, the only group that he presents as victims of the German terror are

³⁶ See "Masovyi mord pol's'ko-bol'shevyts'kykh bandytiv, dokonany v dni 25. 1. 1946 r. na ukrains'komu naseleniu v seli v seli Zavadka Morokhivs'ka ta v inshykh selakh Sianichchyny," in: *Do zbroi* 2 (1946), pp. 22–23.

³⁷ See *ibid.*, pp. 23–26.

³⁸ "Ekonomichni prychny postannia UPA," in: *Do zbroi* 3 (1947), pp. 10–17.

³⁹ The collected volumes of *Do zbroi* are located in the archives of the Ukrainian Free University in Munich.

⁴⁰ See Marko Vira, *Sim lit vyzvol'nykh zmahan'* (1939–1945), Buenos Aires 1946, pp. 5, 14–17.

Ukrainians. The fate of Soviet prisoners of war is described in detail because they were, according to Makar, primarily Ukrainians. He is similarly selective about the deterioration of living conditions and the issue of forced labor. In his telling, only the Ukrainians are affected by these problems. Jews are mentioned neither in the context of violence carried out by Ukrainian nationalists nor as victims of German policies. Leaving the subject of Jews out of his publication follows the logic that the Jewish issue in Ukraine had been “resolved” and that it no longer needed to be addressed after the war. Interestingly, when Makar describes the German massacre of Ukrainians, it resembles descriptions of the mass shootings carried out by the German *Einsatzkommandos*, leaving the impression that the author was well-acquainted with what had happened to the Jews during the Second World War. Also the term “pogrom” appears in the book only in the context of German violence directed toward Ukrainians.⁴¹

The nationalist factions among Ukrainian émigrés were not the only ones who remained silent about the pogroms of July 1941. Even self-described “democrats” who criticized the “nationalists” were silent on the issue. In 1947, the “Ukrainian-democratic weekly” *Na chuzhyni (In a Foreign Land)* criticized the proclamation of a Ukrainian state that had taken place on 30 June 1941, and also criticized its leader (*Providnyk*), Stepan Bandera, but said not a word about the pogrom that had taken place in Lviv on 30 June, just hours before the proclamation was declared.⁴² Neither were the crimes of the UPA mentioned or criticized, even though the UPA was discussed.⁴³

In 1948, the publishing house of the department for foreign affairs of the Zakordonni Chastyny OUN published excerpts of the diary kept by P. Novyna, a partisan in the UPA battalion “Vovky” (“Wolves”), who was killed in an operation on October 19, 1945. A ten-page introduction is included with the sixty-four-page publication in which the UPA is described as “an expression of the active will of the masses of the Ukrainian nation,” and as an army that fought against two enemies and that continues to fight behind the Iron Curtain against the enemies of the Western alliance. The author draws a parallel between the efforts of the OUN-UPA and the struggles that took place in Ukraine between 1917 and 1920, suggesting that political events are repeating themselves. It is also his opinion that “Ukraine, which fought against Russian-Bolshevik imperialism from the

⁴¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 22–27. Ukrainian nationalists contended as early as the 1920s that the Jewish question in Ukraine “needed to be solved.” See, for example Iurii Mylianych, *Zhydy, sionizm i Ukraïna*, in: *Rozbudova Natsiï 20–21 (1929)* nos. 8–9, pp. 271, 276.

⁴² See *Chas opam’iatatys’*, in: *Na chuzhyni*, June 12, 1947, p. 1.

⁴³ See *Bandera i UPA*, in: *Na chuzhyni*, November 12, 1947, p. 6.

beginning, was bound to lose because it was abandoned to fight alone.” To avoid a repetition of events and to keep their common enemies from growing too strong, the West should help Ukraine fight them. Toward the end of the foreword, the editors point out that only those parts of the diary are being published that deal with the UPA’s struggle with the Soviet Union and its defense of the Ukrainian people against Polish-communist forces in the western regions. Despite this attempt at self-censorship, the killing of Polish civilians is mentioned in the diary, even though it is only referred to euphemistically and as justified by Novyna.⁴⁴

A similar narrative also appeared early on in the newspapers of the Ukrainian diaspora. The newspaper *Homin Ukraïny*, which was founded in 1948 and became the official newspaper of the OUN-B in Toronto, published an article in December 1949 under the title “For an Objective Assessment of Historical Experiences.” Its author, Ostap Mlynarchuk, “corrected” the “false” presentation of the OUN’s actions after 22 June 1941 and the proclamation of a Ukrainian state on 30 June 1941, invoking the “objective” perspectives of eyewitnesses who, at the time, did not feel themselves attached to any political movement. According to Mlynarchuk, he wrote the article because the OUN was being defamed by the émigré Ukrainian press, this despite the fact that the OUN “had led the entire liberation movement fighting for the independence of all Ukrainians during the years of the war and the German occupation of Ukraine,” and despite the fact that the OUN had founded the UPA, and was continuing to struggle in resistance against the Soviet occupation until the present day. Furthermore, he states that those who frame the act of 30 June 1941 as an act of collaboration are mistaken. He reminds his readers that “proclamations suddenly appeared on the walls around Lviv calling for the independence of Ukraine,” claiming that “the Ukrainian state is working together with Germany, and with it they would together fight against the Bolsheviks,” but only because “this course of events was obvious to us all,” since “we planned to free Ukrainian lands from the Bolsheviks and set up our own state.”⁴⁵

The memories that Mlynarchuk presents in his article are very significant because they are based on his personal observations. They contain information about which aspects of events were perceived and remembered, and which ones not. However, they cannot tell us whether certain events occurred but were not perceived during the pogrom, or if they were perceived but not remembered, or

44 P. Novyna, Vovky. *Frahmenty z khroniky odnoho viddilu UPA ‘Vovky’*, Paris 1948, pp. 6–7, 9, 19, excerpt, 6.

45 Ostap Mlynarchuk, *Za obiektyvnu otsinku istorychnykh podii*, in: *Homin Ukraïny*, December 10, 1949, p. 6.

if they were indeed remembered but not narrated due to later social and political circumstances. Hence, the author says nothing about what happened to the Jews in Lviv as Stets'ko proclaimed the founding of a Ukrainian state, even though he had to have been an eyewitness to the anti-Jewish excesses. Mlynarchuk only mentions the Jews in one sentence, when he writes that all of the population groups were friendly toward the Germans, with the exception of the Jews.⁴⁶

Like Mlynarchuk, many other Ukrainian eyewitnesses could not remember the mass violence against the Jews, and this despite the fact that they could remember the proclamation of the Ukrainian state in Lviv, which meant that they must have witnessed the pogrom or were involved in carrying it out. Ivan Hryn'okh, a member of the OUN-B and the chaplain for the German *Abwehr* battalion "Nachtigall" ("Nightingale"), a unit that consisted of Ukrainian soldiers, and which was one of the first units that moved into Lviv during the early morning of 30 June after the Soviet army had pulled out, was in the city during the time when the pogrom occurred. Hryn'okh actively participated in the events leading up to proclamation of the state on 30 June. Together with Stets'ko, he visited the Metropolitan of the Greek Catholic Church, Andrei Sheptyts'kyi, whom they convinced to support the state with a pastoral letter. Hryn'okh was also present for the proclamation that was issued that same evening. On the next day, he made a radio broadcast of the proclamation from Lviv and sang German and Ukrainian military songs for those who were listening.⁴⁷

Hryn'okh's activities meant that he was in the city repeatedly while the pogrom was being carried out. He must have therefore also seen the pogrom in more than one part of the city. Like other Ukrainian nationalists, Hryn'okh remained in West Germany after the war and worked as a professor at the Ukrainian Free University in Munich. In 1959, he was heard as a witness in the legal proceedings taken against Theodor Oberländer, who had served in the "Nachtigall" battalion as an expert for Ukrainian matters. Hryn'okh confirmed that he had been in Lviv, but not only disputed the involvement of the battalion and Ukrainian civilians in anti-Jewish mass violence, he also flatly denied that the pogrom had even taken place. In response to the question, whether or not "pogroms and excesses were carried out against the Jews," he responded, "I did not see anything of the sort,

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*

⁴⁷ See Rossoliński-Liebe, *The Ukrainian National Revolution*, pp. 97, 105; Interrogation of Ivan Hryn'okh, in: *Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen (henceforth: Landesarchiv NRW), Gerichte Rep. 350, vol. 2, p. 23.*

even though I walked and drove through many different streets in Lviv during my time there. I can firmly say that I was not informed of anything like that.”⁴⁸

Even after someone read him the testimony of another witness who described the pogrom, Hryn’okh asserted: “I cannot rule out that something like that did indeed occur. I did not however, as I have already stated, see or hear anything like that.”⁴⁹

Another important account of the events in Lviv that was based upon personal memories and experiences was that of Iaroslav Stets’ko, the person who proclaimed the founding of the Ukrainian state on 30 June 1941. Published in 1967 under the title *30 chervnia 1941 (30 June 1941)*, this three-hundred-page book included a foreword by the chief ideologue of Ukrainian fascism, Dmytro Dontsov, whose publications had been essential to shaping Stets’ko and many other Ukrainian nationalists in their youth. Stets’ko was, from a political perspective, probably the most important figure to participate in the events that played out in Lviv from the end of June to the beginning of July 1941. He represented the *Providnyk* Stepan Bandera, who could not personally come to Lviv for the proclamation. Shortly after the proclamation, Stets’ko wrote letters to Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, and Pavelić declaring his loyalty to them and requesting that they recognize the Ukrainian state as a part of the “New Europe.”⁵⁰

Stets’ko’s *30 chervnia 1941* is a prototypical example of selective and politicized memory. For the purposes of this article, we will only focus on those events that are connected to the mass violence committed by Stets’ko’s OUN-B. Unlike Hryn’okh or Mlynarchuk, Stets’ko could remember that pogroms broke out in Lviv and in other places shortly after the invasion of the Soviet Union. However, he regarded them as irrelevant and only mentioned them in the context of German misdeeds and in order to firmly establish Ukrainian non-participation, which he presented as stemming from Ukrainian patriotism. Furthermore, he claimed that the leaders of the OUN-B warned their members and the OUN-B militia against participating with the Germans in the “anti-Jewish” and “anti-Polish” pogroms, indeed, forbidding all types of anti-Jewish violence. Therefore, according to Stets’ko, not a single Ukrainian militiaman or member of the OUN-B participated in the pogrom in Lviv or in any other pogroms. Only some criminal elements, which were not representative of the Ukrainian nation, allowed themselves to

⁴⁸ Testimony of Ivan Hryn’okh, in: *ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ See Rossoliński-Liebe, *The Ukrainian National Revolution*, pp. 96–100.

become involved by the Germans in anti-Jewish violence, and then later joined the militias which were taken over by the OUN-B.⁵¹

The memory of Ukrainian patriots as a group that did not allow itself to be induced by the Germans into antisemitic crimes repeatedly appears in Stets'ko's publication, and in such a way that the uninformed reader inevitably begins to believe it. Trust in the narrator is further strengthened by the fact that Stets'ko remembers these events as an actor who participated in them. Conspicuously, in Stets'ko's telling, it is precisely those individuals and groups who were most often involved in mass violence to whom the victims should have been the most grateful. According to him, it was these people who risked their lives to save victims from the Germans. He reports, for example, that Ivan Ravlyk, a leading member of the OUN-B, who established the militia in Lviv together with other senior OUN-B members, is owed a great deal of thanks by Jews and Poles because he had not betrayed the names of well-known Jews and Poles after being arrested and interrogated for days by the Gestapo.⁵²

By the same token, Stets'ko admits that he was in Lviv, and that he discussed the events of the days that followed with Roman Shukhevych, another important senior member of the OUN-B and an officer of the "Nightingale" battalion, even though Stets'ko limits himself only to the massacres of prisoners that had been committed by the NKVD before the German invasion had begun.⁵³ This bit of selective memory – shaped as it is by the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism – is particularly interesting because both events (the terror committed by the NKVD against political prisoners on the one hand, and the violence carried out by the Germans and the OUN-B against Jews, on the other) were so closely interwoven that one could not discuss the one without being aware of the other. Relatively few of those who were incarcerated as political prisoners were evacuated from the Soviet prisons following the German invasion of the Soviet Union. Many of them were instead murdered by the NKVD during the days that followed. According to Soviet and other documents, 2,800 prisoners were shot in Lviv by the NKVD,⁵⁴ while a total of 8,789 prisoners were shot in all of Ukraine.⁵⁵ The corpses of those

51 See Iaroslav Stets'ko, *30 chervnia 1941*, Lemberg 1967, pp. 77, 177.

52 See *ibid.*, p. 183.

53 See *ibid.*, p. 190.

54 An NKVD collaborator and professor in Kiev, Johann Druschbach, overheard these numbers being mentioned by Soviet officials with whom he departed from Lviv by airplane to Kiev on June 28, 1941. Landesarchiv NRW, Gerichte Rep. 350, vol. 2, p. 72. German estimates place the number of victims between 3,000 and 3,500. See Heer, *Einübung in den Holocaust*, p. 410.

55 Vgl. Karel C. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule*, Cambridge 2004, p. 14.

who had been shot were left in the prisons, and within a few days they were discovered by the Germans as well as members of the local population. In Lviv, the Germans organized a public viewing of the bodies, staging it as an act of stereotypical Jewish-Bolshevism (“Judeo-Communes”), and placing the responsibility for the murders that had been carried out by the NKVD on the Jews. Jews were forced to drag the decomposing corpses out of the prison cellars, and Jewish women had to wash the bodies and kiss the corpses’ hands. While this was occurring, the Jews were beaten, abused, and killed by the Germans, members of the OUN-B militia, and locals. In the end, the corpses of NKVD victims as well as Jews were littered across the prison grounds.⁵⁶

Heroization and Victimization

The Ukrainian diaspora’s memory of the Second World War was shaped by two related components – heroization and victimization – that subsequently cast all Ukrainians as either heroes (of the struggle for national independence) or victims (of other regimes or ideologies). This particular formula for remembering took shape immediately after the war and not only survived to the end of the Soviet Union, but is present among many groups to this day. Since this narrative was widely accepted by nearly all groups of the Ukrainian diaspora, and because historians working in Ukraine used it and accepted it as true, all references to Ukrainian complicity in the Holocaust were dismissed as provocation or propaganda. This political frame of memory was generally retained throughout the 1960s and 1970s, but beginning in the 1980s, it began to come under growing scrutiny because of various Holocaust-related events, including the broadcast of the mini-series “Holocaust,” the Demjanjuk trial, and the work of the Canadian Commission of Inquiry on War Criminals (also known as the Deschênes Commission), in addition to Soviet propaganda. What follows are a few representative examples, primarily from the 1980s, that demonstrate how the Ukrainian diaspora characterized its history in terms of heroization and victimhood in order to avoid confrontation with an uncomfortable topic, or to protect fellow members of the community.

⁵⁶ See also Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, *Der Verlauf und die Täter des Lemberger Pogroms vom Sommer 1941. Zum aktuellen Stand der Forschung*, in: *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 22 (2013), pp. 222–32; Himka, *The Lviv Pogrom of 1941*, p. 215; Grzegorz Hryciuk, *Polacy we Lwowie 1939–1944. Życie codzienne*, Warsaw 2000, p. 204.

Stets'ko and the Declaration of 30 June 1941: The thirtieth of June grew into the most important symbol of resistance against Germany. This day was commemorated in memorial and ritual by various groups of the diaspora long before Stets'ko published his 1967 book *30 chervnia 1941*. The memory of this event was constantly adjusted to match current political debates and trends. For example, in the 1950s, it was the threat of nuclear war with the Soviet Union that provided this event with meaning. Writing in 1958 in the newspaper, *Shliakh peremohy*, V. Shcherbii stated that “we are not being allowed to clearly see this date (the thirtieth of June) as it was and as it must have been. This date was a historical necessity without which Ukraine in our age of technology and atoms would have nothing to offer to the so-called free world.” With this statement, the author meant that, had Stets'ko not proclaimed the Ukrainian state on 30 June 1941, the Ukrainian émigré community would not be in a position to support the West in preparing for a nuclear war. In addition, he wrote that “the stateless Ukrainians lost more struggles before and after 30 June 1941, but on this most memorable of days, they probably won the most important of all victories. They won the struggle for the soul of the Ukrainian nation and for greater understanding of other oppressed nations.”⁵⁷

Following the war, Stets'ko continued his political career in exile. He stepped into the role as the “last premier of a free and independent Ukrainian state,” and also rallied representatives of other nations in the fight against the “red devil.” In 1946 he founded the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations (ABN), which he guided until his death in 1986. The ABN united veterans from various East European ultranationalist, fascist, and antisemitic movements, such as the Iron Guard, the Ustaša, or the Hlinka Party, and remained an influential and serious international organization throughout the Cold War. The German Federal Minister for Expellees, Refugees, and Victims of War, Theodor Oberländer, moved in ABN circles and was a leading member of the European Freedom Council, which worked closely with the ABN and other anti-Communist organizations.⁵⁸ In 1966, the Canadian city of Winnipeg declared Stets'ko an honorary citizen.⁵⁹ On 18 July 1983, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the anti-Communist organization Captive Nations, and the fictitious fortieth anniversary of the ABN, he was invited to the U.S. Congress, where he was received by Vice President George H. W. Bush. One day later, he was invited to the White House to meet with Ronald

⁵⁷ V. Shcherbii, 30. Chervnia v Ukraïni, in: *Shliakh peremohy*, June 29, 1958, p. 2.

⁵⁸ See ABN Correspondence XVIII (1967) 4, on the back of the envelope.

⁵⁹ See Former Prime Minister of Ukraine – Honorary Citizen of Ukraine, in: ABN Correspondence XVIII (1967) 3, p. 31.

Reagan, who had, on various occasions, supported the activities of the anti-Communist “freedom fighters.”⁶⁰

The Antisemitism of Others: A very common element of the Ukrainian diaspora’s memory of the Holocaust, the Second World War, and Jewish-Ukrainian relations was the antisemitism of others. In publications about the Second World War, Ukrainian exiles primarily focused on the antisemitism of the Germans, Poles, and Russians. In articles that focused on the period following the Second World War, Soviet antisemitism was often discussed in detail. In contrast to this, there were no discussions about Ukrainian antisemitism. To broach this issue was understood as a provocation, likely stirred up by Soviet propaganda or Jewish “chauvinists.”

In November 1958, the newspaper *Shliakh peremohy* initiated a series about the Polish-organized pogroms of November and December 1918. The catalyst for this was criticism from Jewish newspapers directed toward Ukrainian author Ivan Franko and his antisemitism, as well as the conduct of certain Polish academics who supported this line of criticism.⁶¹ When various newspapers in Australia and Canada began to publish articles on the Ukrainian pogroms of 1918 and 1919, naming Ukrainians among the perpetrators, Rostyslav Iednyk, writing in the *Shliakh peremohy*, claimed that these pogroms had been started by Russian provocateurs. Furthermore, he declared that the only reason that the Jewish newspapers would write about Ukrainian participation in the pogroms of 1919 was because this was a version of the story invented and spread by Soviet propaganda in order to weaken and defame Ukrainian nationalism and the anti-Soviet liberation struggle. The articles about the pogroms were “not just anti-Ukrainian, but were also anti-statist. They were directed equally against the Ukrainian nation and its state-establishing concepts of freedom and independence.”⁶² A different (anonymous) author claimed that the Ukrainian pogroms of 1919 were initiated solely by Bolsheviks, the “white” Denikin Army, and Poles. To declare

60 For more on Stets’ko as “Premier of a free Ukrainian state,” see Captive Nations Week Observed, in: Ukrainian Echo, August 31, 1983, p. 1; Ukraïna staie predmetom svitovoi polityky: u 25-littia tyzhnia ponevolenykh narodiv i 40-richchia ABN, in: Homin Ukraïny, August 17, 1983, p. 1. For Stets’ko and his visit to the White House, see the same, pp. 1, 3; Politychnyi aspekt vidznachennia richnyts’: TPN i ABN, in: Homin Ukraïny, August 24, 1983, pp. 1, 4.

61 See Iaroslav Hrynevych, Lystopad 1918 r. and L’vovi i zhydy, in: Shliakh peremohy, November 9, 1958, p. 3. For the pogrom in Lviv, see William W. Hagen, The Moral Economy of Ethnic Violence: The Pogrom in Lwow, November 1918, in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 31 (2005), pp. 203–26. Also see Antony Polonsky, The Jews in Poland and Russia, 1914–2008, vol. 3, Oxford 2012, p. 25.

62 Rostyslav Iednyk, Moskva rozpaluie antysemizm, in: Shliakh peremohy, May 24, 1958, p. 2.

that Ukrainians had participated in the pogroms was, for him, an anti-Ukrainian provocation.⁶³

The discourse about the antisemitism of others was maintained throughout the Cold War and was complemented by additional factors related to the politics of history. One of these was the desire of the Ukrainian diaspora's more radical factions to build a healthy relationship with the Jewish community. However, this required one to accept the belief that Jews resented the Ukrainians only because Jews continued to subscribe to Jewish and Soviet stereotypes of Ukrainians, as one anonymous author explained in the article "Do pytan' ukrains'koho-zhydivs'kykh vzaiemyn" ("Questions Concerning Ukrainian-Jewish Relations"), published in 1978. The stereotypes that had been spread by Soviet propaganda were, in his opinion, evidence enough that Ukrainians had not participated in the 1919 pogroms, and this, ergo, was why attempts were being made to blame Ukrainians.⁶⁴ The author came to similar conclusions about the 1941 pogroms. These were remembered, above all, by "older Jews" who were "hostile toward Ukraine and its liberation struggle." Their hostile attitude was made evident because they "constantly referred back to the [1941] pogroms," which harmed the image of the liberation struggle and was, therefore, a stereotype. According to the anonymous author, these same Jews had forgotten how Jews had economically oppressed the Ukrainians and how Ukrainians had fallen victim to Jewish "Pogromists" such as Leon Trotsky and Lazar Kaganovich. Also forgotten was how tolerant Petliura, and other politicians who had tried to establish a Ukrainian state following the First World War, had been toward the Jews. In a memorandum on Ukrainian-Jewish relations that was signed by thirteen people and published adjacent to the article, it was claimed that the "KGB inspired and financed Jewish publications in the United States that were anti-Ukrainian," and that the "contemporary Russian

⁶³ See "Zhydy pro svoje zhyttia v Ukraïni," in: Shliakh peremohy, May 31, 1958, p. 4. It is difficult to determine the number of victims of the pogroms that occurred in the Ukrainian state between 1919 and 1921. Nakhum Gergel, the Deputy Minister for Jewish Affairs in Zentralna Rada (Kiev Central Assembly), placed the number of pogroms that took place at 1,182, and the number of victims between 50,000 and 60,000. The three most important groups of perpetrators were the Ukrainian soldiers of the Zentralna Rada, the soldiers of the White Army, and gangs of local Ukrainian civilians. See also Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, vol. 3, pp. 32–43; as well as Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917–1920*, Cambridge 1999.

⁶⁴ See "Do pytan' ukrains'koho-zhydivs'kykh vzaiemyn," in: Shliakh peremohy, March 5, 1978, p. 2.

Empire was the source of antisemitism, given that it was [the Soviet Union] that had raised the example set by Hitler's Germany to a political principle."⁶⁵

The Movie "Holocaust": Directed by Marvin J. Chomsky, the four-part mini-series "Holocaust," which first appeared on American television in April 1978, and which was shown in other western countries in the following months, attracted much attention to the Holocaust and, at the same time, unleashed significant reactions within the Ukrainian diaspora. By evoking sympathy through the story of a Jewish family from Berlin and showing how National Socialist policies destroyed the lives of Jews in Europe, the movie raised awareness among millions of viewers. The Ukrainian diaspora reacted above all to a scene in the third part of the series, which was set in Ukraine. It shows Jewish partisans ambushing and shooting a group of Ukrainian policemen. Shortly before opening fire, one of the Jewish partisans declares to Rudi Weiss, one of the main characters in the film, "they have killed more of us than the Germans." As one of the Ukrainian policemen attempts to flee, he is pursued by Rudi, who ultimately overpowers him and shoots him, even though the young policeman begs his pursuer not to do so.

The Ukrainian diaspora perceived this as a direct attack and tried to debunk the film as an international campaign orchestrated by Hollywood, Jews, and the Soviet Union against the Ukrainian "liberation struggle." On 5 July 1978, Leonid Poltava published the article, "The Movie 'Holocaust' and Ukraine" in *Homin Ukraïny*. Poltava – who had immortalized Stepan Bandera and other "freedom fighters" and heroized the "struggle for freedom" in his poems – wrote that the creators of the film had deliberately wanted "to show Ukrainians in a bad light," and this was why the "young man Rudi Weiss from Berlin was thrown into Czechoslovakia and later into Ukraine." In his description of the relevant scene, Poltava pointed out that the "police are not an entire people," and that "a police force existed under every regime (in the same way that there were Jewish capos, who murdered their Jewish brothers in fascist concentration camps)." To this he added that, "when a young man was among the police, whose father was murdered by a bullet from the GSU, the Cheka, or the NKVD, and the head of a local department was a Communist and ethnically Jewish, then one can understand this policeman: he avenged his father." In Poltava's opinion, the police had only carried out the orders of the German regime, and indeed, the only reason that Ukrainians had joined the police was for the purpose of "wiping out red, Soviet partisans who would by night shoot civilians and Ukrainian patriots, especially the nationalists." Similarly, he commented on another line that supposedly

⁶⁵ Ibid.

appeared in the film that referred to the UPA, namely: “If you run into a Ukrainian partisan, you’re dead.” Poltava described this line as “anti-Ukrainian.”⁶⁶

The “Ukrainian Holocaust”: In contrast to its silence about and failure to remember the Holocaust and, in particular, Ukrainian involvement in it, the Ukrainian diaspora has, since the late 1970s, very intensely and actively commemorated the mass starvation that took place in central and eastern Ukraine in 1932–1933, which, four decades later, became known as the “Holodomor” or the “Ukrainian Holocaust.” The famine had arisen in the 1950s in public political discourses among Ukrainian émigrés, but it only began to play an important role after (though in some cases shortly before) the film “Holocaust” was shown on North American television. The former head of propaganda for the OUN, Petro Mirchuk, who had been incarcerated in Auschwitz as a political prisoner from July 1942 to January 1945, and until May 1945 had been imprisoned in Mauthausen and other concentration camps, and afterwards had resettled as a DP in the United States, stated in an address to the Anti-Defamation League that the Germans wanted to annihilate the Jews first and foremost, but that Ukrainians and other Slavic people were subsequently targeted for eradication as well. He pointed out that before Germany, the “mass annihilation of nations” had already been initiated by “Bolshevik Moscow,” which “by means of methodical and deliberate mass starvation [...] massacred six to ten million Ukrainian peasants in 1932 and 1933 alone.” According to *Shliakh peremohy*, Mirchuk described the famine as “a premeditated ‘Holocaust.’”⁶⁷

After the movie “Holocaust” was broadcast on American television in 1978, more and more articles that focused on the famine began to appear in the newspapers of the Ukrainian diaspora. In commemoration of the forty-fifth anniversary of the famine, *Shliakh peremohy* published a series of articles dealing with the issue. In one of these articles, Ivan Bodnaruk stated that the “Muscovite Bolsheviks, following the orders of that bloodsucker (*krovopyvtzia*) Stalin, had organized a terrible man-made famine which brought about the deaths of millions of Ukrainians.” Bodnaruk believed that Soviet officials, in addition to the famine of 1932–33, had also coordinated the famines of 1922–23 and 1946–47 as a means of “exterminating” the Ukrainian nation. In 1932–33 alone, eight million Ukrainians were murdered, and already during the first famine of 1922–23, seven million Ukrainians had perished. So as not to forget this catastrophe, Bodnaruk insisted that “we should use the press to call up and mobilize all of our countrymen, to

⁶⁶ Leonid Poltava, Film “Holokost” i Ukraïna, in: *Homin Ukraïny*, July 5, 1978, p. 6.

⁶⁷ R.K., Ukraïns’kyi “holokast”. Dopovid d-ra Mirchuka u “B’nai B’rit” u filadel’fii, in: *Shliakh peremohy*, April 16, 1978, p. 2.

honor the memory of those who died as a result of this starvation. We ask God to hasten the demise of the Muscovite-Soviet regime and to free the Ukrainians and all other oppressed peoples!”⁶⁸

Due to a lack of reliable research, and especially because of limited access to Soviet archives, the actual number of victims in the Soviet Ukraine, which lies somewhere between 2.6 and 3.9 million, was not known during the 1970s and 1980s.⁶⁹ With this in mind, there was a tendency within the Ukrainian diaspora to inflate the number of victims, and it was especially important to place the number at more than five or six million as a way of showing that more Ukrainians were “exterminated” during the “Holodomor” than were Jews during the Holocaust.⁷⁰ What was not discussed was the question of whether, and to what degree, the famine had been caused by Soviet policies that targeted the Ukrainians, or whether the famine had been caused not entirely intentionally by agricultural collectivization.⁷¹

Most of the activists who were involved in this movement of remembrance did not stem from the famine-stricken Soviet Ukraine, but rather came from those regions that had earlier belonged to the Second Polish Republic, that is, eastern Galicia and Volhynia. Nonetheless, it was precisely these Ukrainian exiles who were the most involved in raising memorials for the victims of the famine. In the Canadian city of Edmonton, an initiative for constructing a memorial in honor of the victims of the “Holodomor” was taken up by, among others, Petro Savaryn, a former soldier of the *Waffen-SS* and lecturer at the University of Alberta from 1982 to 1986. At the memorial’s unveiling, speeches were held in which the Holodomor was repeatedly described as a horrible mass crime and compared to the Holocaust.⁷²

“Heroes” and the Genocide of the Jews: Heroization and a ritual worship of the leaders and fighters of the national “liberation struggle” were integral parts of the movement of remembrance created by the Ukrainian diaspora. The actual biographies of the “heroes” were not important and most admirers were not familiar with them. Through this symbolic transformation into “heroes,” issues such as their participation in the Holocaust and other mass crimes, as well as

68 Ivan Bodnaruk, *U 45-richchia holodu v Ukraïni*, in: *Shliakh peremohy*, November 5, 1978, p. 1.

69 See John-Paul Himka, *How Many Perished in the Famine and Why Does It Matter?*, BRAMA, February 2, 2008; http://www.brama.com/news/press/2008/02/080202himka_famine.html.

70 In this context, see Johan Dietsch, *Making Sense of Suffering. Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Historical Culture*, Lund 2006.

71 See Himka, *How Many Perished in the Famine and Why Does It Matter?*; Dietsch, *Making Sense of Suffering*.

72 See Rudling, *Multiculturalism, Memory, and Ritualization*, pp. 751–53; Rossoliński-Liebe, *Celebrating Fascism*, pp. 7–8.

collaboration with the Germans, became taboo. The questioning of this narrative was considered to be anti-Ukrainian and anti-statist. In order to demonstrate how selective their memory was, a brief overview of the biographies of Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera will be presented here, followed by an analysis of their subsequent heroization.

Roman Shukhevych: Roman Shukhevych was born on 20 June 1907 in Krakovets, a small town located 80 kilometers west of Lviv. In 1925, he completed his secondary schooling in Lviv, joined the UVO, and then later studied in Danzig and then in Lviv. He committed his first act of murder on 19 October 1926, when he and an associate, Bohdan Pidhainyi, shot the school superintendent Stanisław Sobiński in Lviv, for which two other Ukrainians were later held responsible.⁷³ Shukhevych was arrested in Warsaw on charges related to the assassination of Polish Interior Minister Bronisław Pieracki, carried out on 15 June 1934, but was released in 1937 on the grounds of false testimony delivered during the trial by other OUN-B members. After the beginning of the Second World War, Shukhevych remained in Cracow, where he took part in assembling the Ukrainian “Nachtigall” battalion of the *Wehrmacht*, and together with Bandera and other OUN-B members he prepared for the establishment of a Ukrainian state. It is unclear whether Shukhevych participated in any of the excesses directed toward the Jews following the occupation of Lviv. According to one soldier from the “Nachtigall” battalion, while on their way to Vinnytsia, the members of the battalion “shot all of the Jews that they encountered in two villages.”⁷⁴ Because of their dispute with the Germans regarding the proclamation of the Ukrainian state, the battalion was disarmed on 13 August 1941, reorganized into the *Schutzmannschaft* Battalion 201, and then sent to Belorussia for a year, where it fought against partisans and participated in the Jewish genocide.⁷⁵ *Schutzmannschaft* Battalion 201 was disbanded in Lviv at the beginning of January 1943. Some of its members were transferred to the *Waffen-SS* division “Galicia,” while others such as Shukhevych joined the UPA, where they proceeded to commit the same kinds of violence against civilians as did the German *Schutzmannschaften*. Shukhevych was promoted to senior commander of the UPA in August 1943, holding this position until his death on 5 March 1950, when he died near Lviv during a fight with Soviet sol-

73 See Mazur, *Życie polityczne polskiego Lwowa*, pp. 119–20, 148.

74 Autobiography of a well-known member of the OUN, in TsDAVOV, f. 3833, op. 1, spr. 57, p. 17; see Bruder, *Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen*, p. 150. The soldier was Viktor Khar’kiv “Khmara.” See I.K. Patryliak, *Viiis’kova diial’nist’ OUN (B) u 1940–1942 rokakh*, Kiev 2004, pp. 361–62.

75 Golczewski, *Die Kollaboration in der Ukraine*, in: Dieckmann/Quinkert/Tönsmeier (eds.), *Kooperation und Verbrechen*, p. 176.

diers from the Interior Ministry. He was fully involved in the mass violence carried out against the Polish populations in Volhynia, and ordered that the “ethnic cleansing” of Polish civilians be extended into in eastern Galicia.⁷⁶ Under the leadership of Shukhevych, the UPA also began to murder numerous Ukrainian civilians during the brutal conflict with the NKVD/MVD, which lasted until the early 1950s.⁷⁷ Parallel to the mass violence carried out against Polish civilians, the UPA also murdered Jews who attempted to survive in the forests. The number of Jewish victims killed by the UPA is estimated between several hundred and several thousand.⁷⁸

Despite involvement in these crimes, Shukhevych’s cult of personality developed within the Ukrainian diaspora immediately following his death. Volodymyr Ianiv, a leading member of the OUN-B – who had been arrested along with Shukhevych in 1934 for the assassination of Pieracki, who had spent much of the Second World War in German concentrations camps as a political prisoner, and who served as the Rector of the Ukrainian Free University in Munich from 1968 to 1986 – characterized the UPA senior commander at a memorial service in Munich as “one of the greatest legends of mankind.” Ianiv stated that Shukhevych’s career started when he shot Sobiński in 1926.⁷⁹ In the following decades of the Cold War, Shukhevych became the most important symbol of the UPA. His memory was openly celebrated, and his image, usually showing him in uniform, regularly appeared in the newspapers of the diaspora. In 1970, Petro Mirchuk published the first hagiography with the title *Roman Shukhevych (Gen. Taras Chuprynka) Commander of the Army of Immortals*.⁸⁰ Some groups in the diaspora, such as the one in Edmonton, commissioned busts of Shukhevych, displaying them on the grounds of their culture centers, where they regularly celebrated nationalist-religious memorial services.⁸¹ Two important days that were annually celebrated

76 Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka*, p. 367.

77 According to Soviet sources, the UPA had killed ca. 20,000 civilians by 1953. See also Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka*, p. 650. On the conflict between the OUN-UPA and the NKVD, see *ibid.*, pp. 414–573, and Statiev, *The Soviet Counterinsurgency*.

78 See John-Paul Himka, *The Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Holocaust*. Paper prepared for the forty-first national convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Boston, November 12–15, 2009; Bruder, *Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen*, pp. 217–23; Friedman, *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations*, in: Friedman/Friedman/Baron (eds.), *Roads to Extinction*, pp. 187–89.

79 Volodymyr Ianiv, *Shukhevych – Chuprynka. Liudyna i symbol. Dopovid na zhalibni akademii 19 lystopada 1950 v Miunkheni, Munich 1950*, pp. 4 (quotation), 8.

80 See Petro Mirchuk, *Roman Shukhevych (Gen. Taras Chuprynka), Commander of the Army of the Immortals*, Toronto 1970.

81 See Rudling, *Multiculturalism, Memory, and Ritualization*, pp. 743–46.

were the anniversary of Shukhevych's death on 5 March, and the UPA festival on 14 October, often celebrated in conjunction with the so-called Holiday of Arms (*Sviato Zbroï*).

In a typical Shukhevych-cult issue of the London newspaper, *Ukraïns'ka Dumka*, dating from 1967, a front-page portrait of Shukhevych was printed with an article from Dr. Sviatomyr M. Fostun. The author began the description of the celebration marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the UPA with the following quote, supposedly from Shukhevych:

The heroic struggle of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the liberating revolutionary activity constitute the most heroic epoch in the history of Ukraine. You should know that the history of mankind has never known such a heroic epoch. Even the heroics of the heroes from Thermopylae are overshadowed by our struggle. Later generations will be raised on the heroism of the UPA and the liberating revolutionary underground. The fighters of the UPA, the Ukrainian revolutionaries will take the place of the courageous Spartans.⁸²

On 22 June 1980, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of Shukhevych's death, an event took place in Toronto involving about six thousand members of the Ukrainian diaspora. It began with a religious service. Behind the altar on the stage, a large portrait of the General in uniform was hung. Following the service, Ukrainians in native dress and military uniforms sang religious and nationalist songs. At the end, a series of short speeches were held praising the General and calling upon Ukrainians not to give up in the struggle against the Soviet Union.⁸³

On 7 March 1985, Dr. Fostun published yet another front-page article in the *Ukraïns'ka Dumka* in honor of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the UPA General's death. He described Shukhevych as a commander who did not give up the fight against the "red empire" even after all the Western states had abandoned him. The heroic struggle of the UPA made him into a "living symbol" that continued to rally Ukrainians to fight against the enemy and to sacrifice their lives for Ukraine. As with his article from 1967 and all of the other essays published in this issue, the author said nothing about the "darker" side of the movement and characterized the UPA as an army that had heroically fought against Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. With that, he also referenced John Armstrong, the first to publish a historical monograph about the OUN. Armstrong's study, which was largely based on the memories and testimonies of OUN members as well as German archival

⁸² Sviatomyr M. Fostun, U 25-ti rokovyny bezprykladnoï epopeï, in: *Ukraïns'ka Dumka*, October 12, 1967, p. 1.

⁸³ See "Khai slava pro velykoho komandyra prokhodyt' u viky," in: *Homin Ukraïny*, July 2, 1980, p. 3.

documents, made no mention of the OUN's participation in pogroms, and was equally silent about its participation in ethnic cleansings during 1943–1944 in Volhynia and eastern Galicia. Likewise, the murders of Jews carried out by UPA went unmentioned in this study.⁸⁴

Stepan Bandera: Stepan Bandera was born in the eastern Galician village of Staryi Uhryniv on 1 January 1909. He attended a Ukrainian high school in Stryi, and then took up the study of agricultural science in Lviv, which, however, he never finished because of his political and terrorist activities. He joined the UVO in 1927. After 1931, he was the head of propaganda and after June 1933, he served as the head of the homeland executive of the OUN. In this capacity, he decisively radicalized the activities of the OUN. He became well known as a result of the assassination of Polish Interior Minister Pieracki on 15 June 1934, which he helped to plan, and for which he received a sentence of life imprisonment. He escaped from prison in September 1939 and was named the *Providnyk* of the OUN faction that would carry his name. Remaining in the General Government, he prepared, together with other leaders of the OUN, including Shukhevych, the proclamation of the Ukrainian state of which he was to be the *Providnyk*. After the state proclamation of 30 June 1941, he was arrested, along with Stets'ko and other leading members of the OUN-B, and was held as a special prisoner in Berlin and Sachsenhausen until September 1944. Following his release, he continued to support the German war effort until February 1945. After the war, he stayed primarily in Bavaria. Together with other OUN exiles, and with the support of American, British, and West German intelligence services, he built an OUN-B center. On October 15, 1959, he was murdered in Munich by Bohdan Stashyns'kyi, a KGB agent.⁸⁵

The heroization of Bandera began as early as the 1930s and 1940s among young Ukrainians in West Ukraine. After the Second World War, it cooled a bit, but then really began to blossom after he had been murdered. Following his death, Bandera was transformed into one of the most important symbols of the Ukrainian “liberation struggle,” and his grave in the Munich Waldfriedhof became a central pilgrimage site for Ukrainian “freedom fighters.” Those OUN members living in exile, as well as veterans of the *Waffen-SS* Division “Galicia” and of the UPA, met there regularly on October 15 to honor the *Providnyk*. Paral-

⁸⁴ Sviatomyr M. Fostun, *Vin zhytyme u vikakh...*, in: *Ukrains'ka Dumka*, October 12, 1967, p. 1. See John Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism 1939–1945*, New York 1955.

⁸⁵ See David Marples, *Stepan Bandera*. In *Search of a Ukraine for Ukrainians*, in: Rebecca Haynes/Martyn Rady (eds.), *In the Shadow of Hitler. Personalities of the Right in Central and Eastern Europe*, New York 2011, pp. 227–44.

lel to this, the Ukrainian diaspora would also honor Bandera on the date of his death, celebrating religious-nationalist memorial services every year in over fifty different cities in various countries of the West. He was remembered as a martyr who – like Shukhevych – had died for Ukraine. Admirers established a museum for him in Nottingham in 1962, which was then in 1978 moved to London, where his personal belongings as well as his death mask and a bust were placed on display. In 1962, a set of monuments with busts of Bandera, Shukhevych, Ievhen Konovalets, and Simon Petliura was unveiled at a youth vacation camp for the Ukrainian diaspora in Ellenville in upstate New York. During summer vacation, Ukrainian boy scouts – often the descendants of the political émigrés who left in 1944 – sang patriotic songs in front of this heroic ensemble, recited heroic and nationalist poetry, performed folk dances, and fortified themselves with traditional Ukrainian dishes. In all of these rituals and in all of the diaspora’s publications, the subject of the Jewish genocide in which Bandera and his faction of the OUN were involved was left out. Connecting Bandera to the Holocaust was understood as an anti-Ukrainian provocation.⁸⁶

Nationalists in the German Concentration Camps: The fact that OUN-B members were kept as prisoners in German camps was a central element to the memory and identity of the Ukrainian diaspora, especially in the 1980s. Serving as a backdrop to their imprisonment was the conflict sparked by the proclamation of the Ukrainian state on 30 June 1941. In July and August 1942, forty-eight members of the OUN-B were sent to Auschwitz I as political prisoners, followed by an additional 130 who were imprisoned in October 1943. Over thirty of these prisoners died in the camp. Altogether, several hundred members of the OUN were sent to concentration camps as political prisoners.⁸⁷

Auschwitz began to play an extraordinarily important role in the life of the Ukrainian diaspora during the Cold War. Those OUN-B members who were imprisoned in Auschwitz became the most recognized representatives and speakers of the diaspora. One example is Petro Mirchuk, an important member of the OUN propaganda machine, who was in Auschwitz from July 1942 to January 1945, and who later wrote hagiographies of leading OUN-B members and published numerous books on the Ukrainian “liberation movement.”⁸⁸ Mirchuk was also

⁸⁶ See Rossoliński-Liebe, *Celebrating Fascism*, pp. 7–12; idem, *Stepan Bandera*.

⁸⁷ See Adam Cyra, *Banderowcy w KL Auschwitz*, in: *Studia nad faszysmem i zbrodniami hitlerowskimi* 30 (2008), pp. 388–402; Franziska Bruder, “Der Gerechtigkeit dienen.” Die ukrainischen Nationalisten als Zeugen im Auschwitz-Prozess, in: *Irmtrud Wojak/Susanne Meil* (eds.), *Im Labyrinth der Schuld. Täter – Opfer – Ankläger*, Frankfurt a.M./New York 2003, p. 138.

⁸⁸ See Petro Mirchuk, *Akt vidnovlennia Ukraïns’koï Derzhavnosti 30 chervnia 1941 roku. Iioho geneza ta politychne i istorychne znachennia*, New York 1952; idem., *In the German Mills of*

active in Jewish-Ukrainian organizations that regarded Ukrainian participation in the Holocaust as Soviet propaganda and argued for reconciliation through forgetting. In his book detailing his trip to Israel, he tells of showing the tattooed number he had received in Auschwitz to historians from Yad Vashem in order to convince them that Ukrainians, and especially Ukrainian nationalists, had been persecuted and killed by the Germans just as the Jews had been.⁸⁹

The subject of OUN-B members in Auschwitz was also presented in the London Bandera museum. To this end, the curators used the drawings of Petro Balei, another OUN-B member who had been imprisoned in Auschwitz. The drawings and their accompanying text suggest that Ukrainian nationalists were the primary group of victims in Auschwitz. Because of their constitutive significance for Ukrainian identity, they were featured in many nationalist publications.⁹⁰

Activists of the Ukrainian diaspora would wear the striped concentration camp prisoner uniforms at anti-Soviet events, especially in the second half of the 1980s. This form of protest was reinforced in response to the Canadian Deschênes Commission, which searched for war criminals, and also by the first Demjanjuk trial, which took place in Israel in 1987. A few days after the Deschênes Commission publicly declared its goals in May 1985, over six hundred activists of the diaspora appeared in Ottawa to demonstrate for the release of Ukrainian political prisoners who were being held in the Soviet Union. Eight students wearing replica concentration camp uniforms stood in a row in front of the Canadian Parliament and read from various texts that referred to the condition of Ukrainian prisoners in the Soviet Union. One important demand was the release of Yuriy Shukhevych, the son of Roman Shukhevych, who had been, with only brief interruptions, held in prison since 1948. The eight students were chained together, and introduced themselves using the names of notable Ukrainian Gulag prisoners and dissidents: Levko Lukyanenko, Danylo Shumuk, Ivan Kandyba, Yuriy Shukhevych, Viacheslav Chornovil, Yaroslav Lesiw, Oles Budnyk, and Oksana Popovych.⁹¹ Their actions symbolically equated the experience of concentration

Death, 1941–1945, New York 1976; *Koly horiat' lis*, 1947; *My Meetings and Discussions in Israel (Are Ukrainians “Traditionally Anti-Semites”)*, New York 1982; *Narys istorii OUN*, Munich 1968; *Revoliutsiynyi zmah za USSD: Khto taki “banderivtsi,” “mel’nykivtsi,” “dviikari,”* New York 1985; *Stepan Bandera. Symvol revoliutsiinoi bezkompromisovosty*, New York 1961; *Ukraiins’ka derzhavnist’, 1917–1920*, Philadelphia 1967; *Ukraiins’ka Povstans’ka Armiia 1942–1952*, Munich 1953; *Za chystotu pozytsii ukraiins’koho vyzvolnoho rukhu*, Munich 1955.

⁸⁹ See Mirchuk, *My Meetings and Discussions in Israel*, pp. 25–26.

⁹⁰ See, for example, Stefan Petelycky, *Into Auschwitz, for Ukraine*, Kingston 1999.

⁹¹ Danylo Shumuk was in fact a victim of the National Socialist regime. He was captured as a member of the Red Army but saved himself from starvation by escaping from the Khorol camp.

camp prisoners with those of Gulag prisoners, placing the victims of National Socialism and the Soviet Union on equal footing, while also publically calling attention to the Soviet Union's totalitarian character. After singing the Ukrainian anthem, the students marched to the Soviet Consulate, where they "prayed for the release of political prisoners" and once more sang the Ukrainian anthem.⁹²

The Rescue of Jews: The rescue of Jews by the UPA was another central motif of the Ukrainian diaspora's memory. Notwithstanding the political instrumentalization of this subject, it is important to note that an unknown number of Ukrainians did in fact help and save Jews despite the imminent danger of punishment meted out by the German occupying forces, the Ukrainian police, and the OUN-UPA.⁹³ A small, unknown number of Jews even managed to survive the Second World War with the UPA. These individuals, mostly doctors and nurses, usually remained with the UPA against their will, and were forced to treat UPA partisans. A number of documents, including the memoirs of survivors, the orders of OUN-B's intelligence services, and the testimonies of OUN activists found in NKVD interrogation records, indicate that the majority of the Jews in the UPA were murdered by functionaries of the OUN-B and UPA partisan groups shortly before or after the Red Army entered western Ukraine. Many of those who had survived with the UPA fled and joined the Soviet partisans and the Red Army. Their reports were in agreement that the UPA partisans, in addition to their vehement hatred of the Soviet Union, widely subscribed to genocidal nationalism and antisemitism, and that the UPA carried out ethnic cleansing against Polish populations and hunted down and murdered Jews who had hid themselves in the forests.⁹⁴

To demonstrate otherwise, Petro Mirchuk published the fake autobiographical report "Alive Thanks to the UPA" in 1957 under the name of Stella Krentsbakh in the volume edited by himself and V. Davydenko, *A Collection of Reports from Former Soldiers of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army*. The account begins with the statement, "the reason that I am alive today and can devote all of my energy to the state of Israel is thanks only to God and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army." The "doc-

⁹² "In support of Ukrainian political prisoners, Deschenes Commission continues probe," in: *Ukrainian Echo*, May 22, 1985, p. 1. For a similar event, see "Za zvil'nennia Iurii Shukhevycha," in: *Homin Ukraïny*, April 9, 1986, pp. 1–2.

⁹³ As of January 1, 2014, Yad Vashem has recognized 2,472 Ukrainians who saved Jews as "Righteous Among the Nations." See <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/statistics.asp>. This number is the lowest estimate for the number of rescue cases.

⁹⁴ See also Himka, *The Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the Holocaust*; Bruder, *Den ukrainischen Staat erkämpfen*, pp. 217–23; Friedman, *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations*, in: Friedman/Friedman/Baron (eds.), *Roads to Extinction*, pp. 187–89; also see Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka*, p. 296; Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews*, p. 256.

ument” tells the story of a Jewish woman born in a small town seventy-five kilometers from Lviv, who, while attending high school, began to “hate the enemies of Ukraine and love its friends.” During the Second World War, she became a “member of the heroic UPA,” surviving among people who “do not divide people into races, but rather, into honest and dishonest people.” After the war, Krentsbakh went to live in Israel “in order to serve this state.”⁹⁵ The Ukrainian diaspora relied heavily on this “autobiography,” forged by Mirchuk, during the Cold War to prove that the UPA saved Jews and was not hostile toward them.⁹⁶

Conclusion

To this day, the Ukrainian diaspora’s memory of the Holocaust has not been thoroughly researched, even though the subject is essential for gaining an understanding of the problems that Ukraine has faced since 1990 in its attempts to come to terms with its history and erect a pluralistic state identity. The political émigrés who left the country in 1944 with the German occupying forces, lived in DP camps, and were later resettled in other countries, developed a memory narrative during the Cold War that strongly resembled the politics of remembrance that is practiced today by various nationalist and right-wing extremist organizations and parties in western Ukraine, and which was popularized by President Viktor Yushchenko during his time in office from 2005 until 2010. An analysis of the Ukrainian diaspora’s memory culture shows that its discourse of memory has been strongly anchored in the propaganda and self-understanding of the OUN and UPA, given that many of the actors had been leading members of the OUN – men such as Lebed, Ianiv, Stets’ko, and Bandera. It was their interpretation of history that prevailed in the diaspora, and then later in Ukraine. Aside from the fact that a considerable number of these figures were involved in the mass violence perpetrated by the OUN and UPA, and that all of them knew about the Jewish genocide and other crimes, such as the ethnic cleansing of Poles, the narrative that they propagated seems to have served as a protective shield in the ongoing struggle against the Soviet Union and for political status in their new places of residence.

Research on the Ukrainian diaspora’s memory of the Holocaust was first made possible by new empirical research into the Second World War and the

⁹⁵ Krentsbakh, *Zhyvu shche zavdiaky UPA*, pp. 342–43, 345–46, 349.

⁹⁶ See Rudling, *The OUN, the UPA and the Holocaust*, p. 25.

Holocaust in Ukraine. This research included in its analysis reports and memoirs of survivors, and did not rely as heavily on the documents left by German and Ukrainian perpetrators, as was the case, until recently, with most of the Holocaust scholarship in Germany and, to some degree, in North America. The expansion and improvement of research methods permitted historians to trace which aspects of the war and the “heroic liberation struggle” were not remembered. They also allowed us to better understand why references to the pogroms or other atrocities that were committed by Ukrainian nationalists or police provoked such strong reactions within the Ukrainian diaspora and also among some historians.

One reason that research into the memory of the Holocaust in the Ukrainian diaspora was delayed is that Ukrainian émigrés, from the beginning, did not understand the Holocaust to be part of their history and identity. On the one hand, the Holocaust was marginalized, while on the other, Ukrainians presented themselves as victims of Jewish capos in the concentration camps. The process of remembrance revealed continuities as well as discontinuities. Among the most important of the continuities was the tendency toward heroization and victimization, as well as a portrayal of the OUN and UPA as an unparalleled, heroic liberation movement that had formed the core of Ukrainian resistance against Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. But the act of remembrance also adapted itself to contemporary political discourses of the Cold War, referring to questions such as the use of nuclear weapons, which the Ukrainian exiles integrated into their own discussions about resistance, believing that their political activities would prove useful in a future nuclear war with the Soviet Union.

An important transformation in the memory of the Ukrainian diaspora was brought about by the movie “Holocaust,” which confronted émigrés with Ukraine’s participation in the Holocaust. This reinforced a paradigm of victimization within the commemorative discourse, mainly through the instrumentalization of the famine of 1932–1933 in the Soviet Ukraine, which provided Ukrainian émigrés with the opportunity to present themselves as a group that had already suffered more before the Second World War than the Jews suffered during the war itself. Similarly, the Demjanjuk trial and the activities of the Deschênes Commission affected the self-understanding and the self-portrayal of members of the Ukrainian diaspora, who portrayed themselves at political demonstrations as victims through the use of Holocaust symbols.

The memory narrative in which Ukrainians appeared as heroes and victims, but not as perpetrators, was, from a political perspective, advantageous to the nationalist factions of the Ukrainian diaspora during the Cold War. At the same time, however, it was also disastrous for the process of coming to terms with Ukrainian participation in the Holocaust and collaboration with the Germans. This narrative protected the identity and self-understanding of the Ukrainian émigrés

and their children, who knew their fathers as tragic but courageous heroes. The ritualization of this deeply rooted political memory was very important. Through regularly held religious-nationalist celebrations, the Ukrainian exiles reassured themselves that their portrayal of history was both generally accepted and indispensable for attaching oneself to the tradition of the “liberation struggle” and for carrying forward the war against the “occupiers of Ukraine.” Even though the actors lived in different parts of the world, they formed a coherent community of memory that cultivated a common view of the history of the Second World War, and that suppressed any mention of Ukrainian participation in the genocide of the Jews.

Jürgen Zarusky

Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands*

A Critical Response to the Construction of a
Historical Landscape

Introduction

Timothy Snyder's book, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*,¹ has received an enormous international response. According to the text on the dust jacket, it has appeared in twenty languages. Countless reviews praise the book and the author in the most effusive language. They emphasize the author's scholarly courage for placing the mass crimes that were committed by Stalinism and National Socialism in Eastern Europe within a common perspective; for his balanced approach to both sides; for his stupendous grasp of research literature and sources in numerous languages; and not least, for his humanistic approach, which focuses on the suffering of individuals, and which he refuses to let become obscured by abstract statistics. Jost Dülffer identifies Snyder's book as "one of the most important accomplishments in the field of recent European history of the last few years."² Even critics who raise issues of conceptual unclarity, and who maintain that the book goes too far in equating National Socialism and Stalinism, pay respect to the book's achievement as a scholarly synthesis that pulls together the results of countless in-depth studies and makes them accessible to a general audience.³

1 See Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, New York 2010; for the German version: *Bloodlands. Europa zwischen Hitler und Stalin*. Translated into German by Martin Richter, Munich 2011. Page references given in the main text are from the American edition.

2 See Jost Dülffer's review in *Osteuropa* 61 (2011) no. 8–9, pp. 365–67. For similar reviews, see, for example, Anne Applebaum, *The Worst of the Madness*, in: *The New York Review of Books*, November 11, 2010, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2010/nov/11/worst-madness>; Bernhard Schulz, *In der Todeszone*, in: *Der Tagesspiegel* from August 21, 2011, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/in-der-todeszone/4524792.html>. A list of links to predominantly English reviews can be found on Timothy Snyder's homepage, <http://www.yale.edu/history/faculty/snyder-book-reviews.html>.

3 See Ahlrich Meyer, *Comeback der Totalitarismustheorie? Timothy Snyder untersucht in "Bloodlands" die Überlagerung von nationalsozialistischem und stalinistischem Terror*, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, July 27, 2011; Stefan Reinecke, *Topographie des Massenmords*, in: *taz*, August 5, 2011.

Snyder presents us with a “discovery” – a death zone created by Stalin and Hitler in Eastern Europe. It comprised the territories that were afflicted, one after another, by the worst mass crimes of the dictators. Snyder geographically defines this space – moving from the east, and in reference to present-day boundaries, as follows: “St. Petersburg and the western rim of the Russian Federation, most of Poland, the Baltic States, Belarus and Ukraine” (p. 385).⁴ According to the author, the Stalinist and National Socialist regimes murdered about fourteen million people in this region between 1933 and 1945, with ten million being booked to Hitler’s account, and four million to Stalin’s. Using an extremely suggestive title, carried over untranslated from the English to the German edition, Snyder presents an overview of the mass murders of both dictators in this geographic space, imparting clarity and emotion to the story through the depiction of the tragic fates of many individual people. The contours of the region that Snyder takes into focus, and which he calls “Bloodlands,” are determined by death statistics: “The form of the book does not grow out of the political geography of empires, but from the human geography of the victims,” states the book’s Introduction. “The Bloodlands were not a real or imagined political territory, they were simply the setting where Europe’s most brutal regimes did their most murderous work” (p. xviii). Only through the description of these atrocities, Snyder postulates, can the “central event” of European history be properly recognized (p. 380).

This sets a high standard, as nothing less than a new understanding of recent European history is at stake. Such a sweeping thesis deserves critical scholarly evaluation, especially in view of its wide reception by the general public. Such an evaluation will be carried out here. Briefly summarized, the results are as follows. The “Bloodlands” are not an historical landscape, but rather a synthetic construction in which the author himself does not consistently operate. The book offers not so much a study of an historical region as the establishment of a problematic narrative. The characteristics of this narrative include:

- an “ethnicization” of Stalin’s crimes, suggesting that they were carried out with similarly murderous ethno-centric intentions as the crimes of National Socialism;
- the use of a vague economic concept to paper over the ideological differences between the regimes and the resulting differences in how these regimes constructed their enemies;

⁴ Note from the editors: For this translated version of Zarusky’s article, quotations from Snyder’s *Bloodlands* are based on the English text of the book, although Zarusky’s original review cited the German edition. A comment by Zarusky criticizing the quality of the German translation has been omitted here.

- a perspective on the interaction between National Socialist Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union in the Second World War that is distorted in several respects.

Snyder definitely raises an awareness of the fact that the epicenter of Europe's political catastrophe lay further to the east than is reflected in the most familiar historical narratives. At the same time, however, the "Bloodlands" concept narrows the historical horizon in several ways. Historical tragedies that occurred within the geographic boundaries specified by the author, such as the Soviet famine of 1932/33, the Great Terror of 1937/38 in the Soviet Union, or the Holocaust, are fit into a pattern that narrows our view rather than broadening it. Out of this perspectival distortion, which is exacerbated by several further characteristics of the text, emerges an historical narrative in which the totalitarian regimes of Hitler and Stalin resemble one another to a degree that is not supported by current research on National Socialism and Stalinism. And the German-Soviet War, "the most destructive and barbaric war in the history of mankind,"⁵ in which the Nazi regime fully unleashed its murderous potential, and which also decided the fate of Hitler's regime, finds no suitable place within the "Bloodlands" concept.

The "Bloodlands" Concept

Snyder begins his book with a short chapter titled "Hitler and Stalin." In extremely brief, if not to say too brief, accounts of the rise of both dictators, he follows their trajectories back to a common starting point, namely, the global economic crisis. Like Hitler, Stalin was convinced that a radical restructuring of the agricultural sector would provide a solution to the problems of the crisis-ridden economy of the early 1930s. Stalin's solution was collectivization, while Hitler's answer was the establishment of a new empire in Eastern Europe. These visions would have affected every country between Berlin and Moscow, with the "utopias of control" overlapping in the Ukraine. "For both Hitler and Stalin, Ukraine was more than a source of food. It was the place that would enable them to break the rules of traditional economics, rescue their countries from poverty and isolation, and remake the continent in their own image." (p. 19)

This statement is not further explained. That Hitler's war aims affected all of Europe is obvious, but why would this also have been the case with the col-

5 Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936–1945*, Stuttgart 2000, p. 512.

lectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union? Snyder does not say. Beyond this rather loose and not altogether accurate frame of interpretation, he provides no further information regarding his book's methods, lines of questioning, or arguments. This creates the impression that the "Bloodlands" concept is a natural historical landscape, requiring only a detailed description in order to uncover European history's long-buried "heart of darkness."⁶ But the "Bloodlands" are not a real historical landscape, and they do not come into being simply through the blending together of the various chronologies of the mass murders that took place in this same large region. What we are really presented with is a montage of particular interpretations of these events, a fact that is not made clear by the author. Before taking a closer look at these aspects of the book, and then asking what kind of interpretation of the era of Hitler and Stalin results from them, the structure of the book and its principles of composition must first be examined.

The initial explanation of the "Bloodlands" concept is followed by eleven chapters devoted to the political mass crimes that, according to the author, took place primarily in this geographic space, with the book's presentation focusing on a series of specific places. The first chapter describes the Ukrainian famine of 1932/33, where, according to recent research, 3.3 million people died. The next two chapters deal with Stalin's second mega crime after collectivization and famine, namely the Great Terror of 1937/38; here, the so-called Kulak operation and the "national operations" are discussed individually. The fourth chapter shifts the focus further toward the west. At its center is the destruction of the Polish state by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939 as well as the terror that both occupying powers imposed there. There follows, under the somewhat irritating heading "The Economics of Apocalypse," an account of Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union and Germany's policies of occupation. Here, Snyder concentrates primarily on the starvation of the population, among which the most profoundly affected were Soviet prisoners of war and the besieged city of Leningrad. The focus of chapters six to eight, which total around ninety pages, is on the Shoah. First, the author addresses the relationship between the conduct of the German war against the Soviet Union and the mass murder of the Jews. In the chapter "Holocaust and Revenge," at the center of which stand Belarus and Minsk, the subjects are the Minsk Ghetto, partisan warfare, and the particularly murderous terror of the occupation. "Death Factories" is the title of the eighth chapter, which covers the murder of Polish Jews in the extermination camps erected in Poland. The following chapter, "Resistance and Incineration," focuses on the resistance of the

⁶ This metaphor, which comes from the title of one of Joseph Conrad's books, is used in the dust cover text of the German edition.

Warsaw Ghetto from April to May 1943 and the Warsaw Uprising from August to October 1944, within the framework of which it discusses Polish-Jewish and Polish-Soviet relations. The large population movements of the postwar period are examined in the tenth chapter under the title of “Ethnic Cleansing,” while the eleventh chapter is devoted to the antisemitism of late Stalinism. The concluding chapter carries the simple title “Humanity.” Here, somewhat surprisingly, Snyder posits the necessity of comparing the Nazi and Stalinist regimes, provides an excursus about Hannah Arendt and Vasily Grossmann, again summarizes the findings of his study, all leading in the end to reflections on the handling of death statistics and the fates of individual human beings.

Snyder does not just have his view fixed on a large number of shifting settings, which he assembles like dancers moving in a circle, but he also approaches events on various levels and tries to make the human dimension of major political developments concrete through the trenchant presentation of stories about numerous victims. This method, however, largely excludes intermediate factors, such as the specific conditions under which local or regional authorities rendered decisions. Moreover, the author does not limit himself to an overview of the persecutions that constituted the “Bloodlands,” but constantly seeks to uncover interactions and establish comparisons between the dictatorships and their various protagonists. Out of these structural elements he crafts a text that is indebted to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of reader-friendly narrative unburdened by debates over research, a genre over which the author has a perfect command.

Snyder has introduced “the spatial turn, that is, the consideration of political-geographic spaces, to comparative genocide research,” Ahlrich Meyer has written, citing what he regards as a specific innovation of the book.⁷ The author of *Bloodlands* is, however, not the first to have attacked this difficult summit. Preceding him were Dietrich Beyrau with *Schlachtfeld der Diktatoren*,⁸ published in 2000, and six years later, Jörg Baberowski and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, who in their book, *Ordnung durch Terror: Gewaltexzesse und Vernichtung im nationalsozialistischen und stalinistischen Imperium*, developed the thesis that “only in the spaces of the empire where the authority of the state was virtually non-existent” could “the Bolsheviks and Nazis work unhindered toward the extermination of their collective enemies.”⁹ These works are small books of an essay-like character.

⁷ Meyer, *Comeback der Totalitarismustheorie*.

⁸ See Dietrich Beyrau, *Schlachtfeld der Diktatoren. Osteuropa im Schatten von Hitler und Stalin*, Göttingen 2000.

⁹ Jörg Baberowski/Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, *Ordnung durch Terror. Gewaltexzesse und Vernichtung im nationalsozialistischen und stalinistischen Imperium*, Bonn 2006, p. 90. This book

A more in-depth study, *The Lands Between*, was published by Alexander Prusin, who analyzed the conflict-plagued details of alternating conquests made by large neighboring states on the belt of territory from Estonia to Moldavia between 1870 to 1992, with a clear emphasis on the period from 1939 to 1953.¹⁰

The historical concepts of space employed in these works are by no means all the same. They vary depending on the questions being asked. What is clear, however, is that “space” as a category for analyzing the great dictatorships of Europe is all the rage. However, none of these authors has pushed this approach with as much force as Snyder, who uses spilled blood and political mass murder to set the foundational criteria for the boundaries of a space. But the raw statistical concentration of deaths stemming from lethal totalitarian policies as they played out in particular regions tell us little about their reasons, causes, and modes of implementation. Snyder does not reflect on the problem of this method, or at least, does not do so explicitly. His research agenda is basically limited to the argument that his narrative “brings the Nazi and Soviet regimes together, Jewish and European history together, and the national histories together. It describes the victims, and the perpetrators. It discusses the ideologies and plans, and the systems and the societies” (p. xix). The question is: to what end? What is the purpose behind this synthesis? Snyder is silent on this point, and he also fails to inform the reader that many of the issues that are covered in *Bloodlands* are still very much matters of dispute among scholars.

Genocide by Starvation?

The chapters that cover the crimes of the Stalin regime serve as the narrative’s point of entry and departure. The first chapter is titled “The Soviet Famines,” but it concentrates entirely on the Ukrainian famine of 1932/33. Here, Snyder leaves the impression that current research regards the famine, which left nearly three and a half million victims in its wake, as the product of Stalin deliberately and willfully initiating a genocide by starvation. “In the waning weeks of 1932, facing no external security threat and no challenge from within, with no conceivable justification except to prove the inevitability of his rule, Stalin chose to kill mil-

was published in honor of Dietrich Beyrau’s sixty-fifth birthday. For a critique of the concepts laid out in this study, see Jürgen Zarusky’s review, in: H-Soz-u-Kult, March 13, 2007, <http://hsoz-kult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2007-1-170>.

¹⁰ See Alexander V. Prusin, *The Lands Between. Conflict in the East European Borderlands, 1870–1992*, Oxford 2010.

lions of people in Soviet Ukraine” (p. 42). Nobody besides a handful of old and neo-Stalinists seriously argues that Stalin’s policies did not produce a famine in the Soviet Union in 1932/33, which claimed about six million victims in the Ukraine, in Kazakhstan – where it was the deadliest – in the North Caucasus, in the Volga and Black Earth Regions, and also in the Urals and West Siberia.¹¹ What is strongly contested is the question as to what caused this mass death. Was it the ruthless adherence to an absurd fantasy of class warfare and an ineffectual communist agricultural utopia, or was it an intentional act of mass murder aimed especially at Ukrainians?

The scholarly dispute surrounding this issue has lasted for over twenty-five years. It was set off in 1986 by Robert Conquest in his book, *Harvest of Sorrow*,¹² where he posited the genocide thesis, which was then subsequently rejected, among others, by the German East European historian Stephan Merl, a specialist in Soviet agricultural history.¹³ From there, the debate developed further, above all, in the field of Anglo-Saxon research on Eastern Europe. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the famine also became a central subject in Ukrainian historiography. Under President Yushchenko, the argument that the Holodomor was a genocide directed at the Ukrainian nation was sanctioned by law and further propagated abroad. According to the state’s official statement on the subject, which repeated the exorbitantly inflated number of ten million victims, Stalin attempted to purposefully destroy the Ukrainian nation.¹⁴ Serious historical research in the Ukraine has since abandoned the more exaggerated numbers,¹⁵ but continues to hold to the genocide thesis. In contrast, Russian historians in particular point toward agro-political causes and the fact that the famine also affected other regions in the Soviet Union.¹⁶

11 See Nikolai Ivnitskiĭ, *Golod 1932–1933 godov v SSSR: Ukraina, Kazakhstan, Severnyi Kavkaz, Povolzh’e, Tsentral’no-Chernozemnaia oblast’, Zapadnaia Sibir’, Ural*. Moscow 2009, p. 243.

12 See Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*, New York 1986.

13 See Stephan Merl, *Wie viele Opfer forderte die “Liquidierung der Kulaken als Klasse”? Anmerkungen zu einem Buch von Robert Conquest*, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 14 (1988), pp. 534–40; idem, *Entfachte Stalin die Hungersnot von 1932–1933 zur Auslöschung des ukrainischen Nationalismus?*, in: *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 37 (1989), pp. 569–90.

14 See Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, *Holodomor. Ukrainian Genocide in the Early 1930s*, Kiev w. y., pp. 3, 7, 12, online: http://www.president.gov.ua/docs/Holodomor_English_version.pdf.

15 Stanislav Kul’chitskii, *Ukrainskii Golodomor kak genotsid*, in: Viktor Kondrashin (ed.), *Sovremennaia rossiisko-ukrainskaia istoriografiia goloda 1932–1933 gg. v SSSR*, Moscow 2011, pp. 107–94, here p. 194.

16 Viktor Kondrashin, *Golod 1932–1933 gg. v sovremennoi rossiiskoi i zarubezhnoi istoriografii: vzglyad iz Rossii*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 8–56.

Without informing his readers about this debate, Snyder presents the Ukrainian historiography as though it were the accepted narrative. He does not explicitly state that Stalin wanted to destroy the Ukrainian nation, but he does quote a statement made by an unnamed “Soviet official” to an equally anonymous “Italian diplomat,” claiming that “ethnographic material” in the Ukraine had been altered, and that the demographic structure in the Ukraine – as in Kazakhstan – had been transformed to the advantage of the Russians (p. 52). A more in-depth analysis does not follow, however, even though the developments in question could be attributed to many possible causes, such as a “Russian genocide” by the Georgian Stalin targeted at Kazahks and Ukrainians, or the divergent ethnic compositions of the rural and urban areas, with the latter having been less affected by the famine. Relying on depressing descriptions of one of the greatest politically caused mass famines in history,¹⁷ Snyder explains the measures that led to the catastrophic escalation in the Ukraine: the forced requisition of grain, which robbed the peasant population of practically all of its important source of food; the rigid foodstuff penalties imposed on those who did not fulfill delivery schedules; the system of “black lists,” with which entire villages were cut off from economic exchange; and the restriction of freedom of movement, which hindered starving peasants from fleeing into cities or into other Republics. Evidence for the “planned mass murder of millions of people,” Snyder asserts, is “most evident in Soviet Ukraine” (p. 42).

It is nowhere near as clear as Snyder presents it. True enough, Stalin himself stood behind the measures in question, and he bore the primary guilt for their consequences. The question, however, whether the results were in fact what he had intended, remains unanswered. Numerous documents, which became available after the “Russian archive revolution,” show that Stalin was not silent about the murder of people in internal communications, not in regard to the organization of show trials, the implementation of forced collectivization – where it was not only decided in 1930 that mass deportations and arrests would be undertaken, but that intransigent Kulaks would be shot – and not in regard to the Great Terror, with its death quotas approved by the Politburo, amounting to hundreds of thousands of deaths. Documentary evidence for an intention on the part of Stalin to starve millions of peasants in the Ukraine does not, however, exist. Advocates of

¹⁷ But not, as Snyder writes, “the greatest artificial famine in the history of [the] world,” p. 41. This was caused by the head of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Zedong, with his “Great Leap Forward” between 1958 and 1962; see Frank Dikötter, *Mao’s Great Famine. The History of China’s Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958–62*, London 2010.

the genocide theory base their argument on a not altogether compelling method that involves a reverse inference from results onto intentions.¹⁸

The other interpretive approach that Snyder discards without explicitly saying so is to take Stalin at his word. According to this view, Stalin, because of his warped perception of reality, genuinely did believe that the peasants were withholding their harvests in order to sabotage the Soviet order. At the latest, this notion can be detected in Stalin's thinking as early as the crisis of 1927, when the grain that was needed in the cities and for the army sat in rural storehouses because Russian industry produced too few finished goods to trade for it. Stalin took what were completely normal market-conforming actions for farmers, who still owned their own land, and mentally squeezed them into the political categories of class warfare. This is what he still believed in the spring of 1933, when Mikhail Sholokhov, author of the novel *And Quiet Flows the Don*, and one of Stalin's favorite writers, wrote him a letter disputing the existence of "Kulak sabotage" in the North Caucasus and reported on the terrorizing of the peasantry by party functionaries. In response, Stalin conceded the possibility that mistakes and excesses had occurred, but what decided the matter for him was "that your precious peasants had waged a war of attrition against the Soviet Union. A life or death struggle, my dear comrade Sholokhov!"¹⁹

Lev Kopelev, who never forgave himself for taking part in the requisition campaign as a young functionary, explained how this ideological view of the Communist rank and file worked in his memoir, *The Education of a True Believer*.²⁰ The fact that many peasants understandably attempted to create secret grain stockpiles as a way of circumventing ruthless Bolshevik agricultural policies was used by Communists on every level as a validation of their theories about class warfare, even when raids into the countryside discovered only paltry amounts of contraband. As Kopelev points out, they saw themselves as participants in a struggle full of historical meaning, not a campaign to wipe out a part of the Ukrainian nation.

Other details also speak against the genocide thesis, including the fact that a significant number of the individuals whose policies brought about the famine

18 Kul'chitskii, Ukrainskii Golodomor, in: Kondrashin (ed.), *Istoriografiia goloda*, pp. 176–87.

19 Extracts from this exchange of letters are printed in: Nicolas Werth, *Ein Staat gegen sein Volk. Gewalt, Unterdrückung und Terror in der Sowjetunion*, in: Stephane Courtois et al. (eds.), *Das Schwarzbuch des Kommunismus. Unterdrückung, Verbrechen und Terror*, Munich 2000, pp. 51–295, here p. 186. Snyder mentions this book in his bibliography but makes no reference to the aforementioned exchange of letters.

20 See Lew Kopelev, *Und schuf mir einen Götzen*, Göttingen 1996 (first published in 1979), pp. 289–369.

were themselves Ukrainians, that the famine affected those in the countryside much more than it did those who lived in cities, and lastly, that other ethnic groups, especially the Kazakhs, were also affected by the famine of 1932/33.²¹ There is no room for them in “the human geography of victims” on which the “Bloodlands” concept is based.

Evaluating the famine and the issues surrounding it has important implications for one’s basic understanding of the Stalinist regime and for comparisons between it and the Hitler dictatorship. The fundamental question is whether ethnic-essentialist or even biological-racist categories lay at the heart of Stalinism, which is in turn crucial for determining the ideological proximity, or distance, between Stalinist Communism and National Socialism. Snyder, who favors the genocide thesis, treats it in the same manner that he treats the Great Terror of 1937/38, that is, he favors a particular interpretation without placing it in the wider context of scholarly discourse.

Stalin’s Terror as Ethnic Persecution?

The concept of the “Great Terror” can be traced back to Robert Conquest’s 1968 book of the same name.²² Relying on sources that were available in the West at the time, Conquest intended to reconstruct the persecutions of the years 1934 to 1938. Because of documents that have become available since 1992, we now know much more about these events, especially the so-called mass operations upon which Snyder concentrates. More than one and a half million people were arrested between July/August 1937 and November 1938, and of these, 1.34 million were classified into one of two categories by extrajudicial committees, that is, they were either shot or they were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment in the Gulag. Almost seven hundred thousand of those who were arrested were executed. Ultimately, responsibility for this mass persecution fell on the Politburo, that is, on Stalin personally.²³ The starting point of this mass persecution was the so-called Kulak operation. The order initiating this operation, NKVD Order 00447, defined the target group in rather loose terms. It included Kulaks who had

21 See Ivnitskii, Golod, and Manfred Sapper/Volker Weichsel/Agathe Gebert (eds.), *Vernichtung durch Hunger. Der Holodomor in der Ukraine und der UdSSR*, Berlin 2004 (Osteuropa 12/2004).

22 See Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror. Stalin’s Purge of the Thirties*, London 1968.

23 For an informative overview, see Nicolas Werth, *Les “Opérations de Masse” de la “Grande Terreur” en URSS (1937–1938)*, in: *Bulletin de l’Institut d’histoire du temps présent* 86 (2006), pp. 6–167.

escaped from banishment and had returned to their villages, or who had moved to the growing cities and industrial centers; members of persecuted churches and religious groups; members of long suppressed political parties, from Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to Azerbaijani and Armenian nationalists; and former members of the Tsarist police. In the end, ordinary criminals were also added to the list. Together, these groups were labeled as “gangs of anti-Soviet elements” that were to be eliminated.²⁴ Judgments were rendered *in absentia* by troikas, three-person commissions organized on the level of republics, regions, and provinces (Oblast’) and staffed by the respective heads of the NKVD and party as well as a prosecutor.²⁵ Additional waves of persecutions followed on the coattails of Order 00447, primarily targeting supposed espionage networks composed of ethnic minorities. In these “national operations,” among which Poles and Germans were the most significant target groups, regional heads of the NKVD and prosecutors (known as the “dvoika”) rendered preliminary decisions upon which the “central dvoika” – NKVD head Nikolai Yezhov and the state prosecutor of the Soviet Union, Andrei Vyshynskii – based their judgments.

Snyder describes the Kulak and national operations in two separate chapters as “class terror” and “national terror.” Even though the so-called Kulak operation formed the most significant persecution of the Great Terror, with around eight hundred thousand total victims, with more than three hundred thousand shot,²⁶ Snyder covers it only briefly. The majority of the third chapter is devoted to possible causes of the Great Terror arising from the international context. Noticeably, Snyder does not refer to the political opponents from the revolutionary period who were categorized as enemies in Order 00447. The “other anti-Soviet elements,” in addition to Kulaks and criminals, were, in Snyder’s judgement, “simply the people on whom the local NKVD had a file” (p. 82).

This sloppy interpretation of Order 00447 leads to misinterpretations.²⁷ In no way did the head of the Ukrainian NKVD, Izrail Leplevskii, expand “the framework of Order 00447 to include Ukrainian nationalists.” (p. 84). Ukraine was not treated differently, because all possible political opposition groups were to be persecuted from the beginning.²⁸ Snyder’s argument that Ukraine was the focal

24 A copy of the order can be found in Rolf Binner/Bernd Bonwetsch/Marc Junge, *Massenmord und Lagerhaft. Die andere Geschichte des Großen Terrors*, Berlin 2009, pp. 106–20.

25 The prosecutors functioned in part as state attorneys, but their responsibilities also included different forms of administrative oversight.

26 See Binner/Bonwetsch/Junge, *Massenmord*, p. 662.

27 Only in the following chapter does Snyder, *Bloodlands*, p. 93, mention in passing the categories of political enemies, but he does not go into further detail about them.

28 Also see Jurij Šapoval, *Die Behandlung der “ukrainischen Nationalisten” im Gebiet Kiev*, in:

point of the killings is also put into a proper perspective by persecution statistics that include the entire Soviet Union.²⁹ The rate of persecution that followed in Ukraine after Order 00447 was high, but it was vastly surpassed, for example, in Karelia, in the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Republic, and among the Volga Germans. In particular, however, the statistics show that the Terror reached even into the most far-flung corners of the Soviet Empire, and for this reason, it makes little sense to reduce the Terror to the territory of the “Bloodlands.” What is also mistaken is Snyder’s assertion that the number of death sentences that were handed down under 00447 rose in 1938 because the Gulags’ capacity to accept prisoners had been exhausted (p. 84). As Marc Junge, Rolf Binner, and others have shown in their research, the increase in death sentences followed a shift in emphasis toward the prosecution of categories of political enemies whose “crimes” were seen as more serious.³⁰ In addition, even though the bloody madness was based on excessive suspicion and flimsy accusations, the documents show that efforts were indeed made to produce “evidence” in every case. Even in this extremely perverse form, the principle of “no punishment without guilt” (*nulla poena sine culpa*) was formally upheld.

This is also important when evaluating the second strand of the Great Terror, the so-called national operations. Here, Snyder pays particular attention to the largest one, the “Polish Operation.” At its center stood the chimera of a far-flung espionage and sabotage organization that was given the label Polish Military Organization, following on Piłsudski’s Polska Organizacja Wojskowa, which had been founded during the First World War. The manner in which Snyder handles the source material for this operation, and, above all, Order 00485 and its extensive cover letter³¹ – both dated 11 August 1937 – is a *tour de force* of creative source criticism. While the document describes sprawling conspiracy scenarios, in which members of the elite, such as the main defendant in the first Moscow show trial, Grigory Zinoviev, and Marshall Tukhachevsky, who was also sentenced to death, were supposedly involved, for Snyder, Order 00485 – in contrast to the more class-oriented Order 00447 – “seemed to treat an ethnic group

Rolf Binner/Bernd Bonwetsch/Marc Junge (eds.), *Stalinismus in der sowjetischen Provinz 1937–1938. Die Massenaktionen aufgrund des operativen Befehls No. 00447*, Berlin 2010, pp. 335–52, here p. 335.

²⁹ See Binner/Bonwetsch/Junge, *Massenmord*, pp. 587–682. Snyder relies on the Russian edition: Mark Junge/Genadii Bordiugov/Rol’f Binner, *Vertikal’ Bol’shogo terrora. Istoriia operatsii po prikazu NKVD No. 00447*, Moscow 2008, pp. 519–623.

³⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 274, and Binner/Bonwetsch/Junge, *Massenmord*, p. 289.

³¹ Published in V.N. Chaustov, V.P. Naumov and N.S. Plotnikova (eds.), *Lubianka. Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie gosbezopasnosti NKVD 1937–1938*, Moscow 2004, pp. 301–21.

as an enemy of the state” (p. 93). Without further explanation, one page later he writes of “ethnic murders,” and a page later one encounters the conclusion that the “ethnic character of the operations quickly prevailed in practice, as perhaps it was bound to from the beginning.” In the end, a quote from a statement by a Moscow NKVD functionary is supplemented by Snyder’s observation that the official understood the gist of the order: “his organization ‘should destroy the Poles entirely’” (pp. 94–95).

The question as to why this did not happen is not answered, nor is it even posed. Snyder’s speculation that the letter of instruction accompanying Order 00485 served to suppress the “internationalist (or self-preservationist) instinct” of the senior NKVD officers, especially those of Jewish heritage,³² is in no way supported by the documents. The instruction letter simply states what the purpose was, namely, the persecution of “Polish spies” and not Poles as such. A “spy” of this sort – as in the real world of intelligence gathering – did not necessarily have to be a Pole. This is shown by an example from western Siberia, where, beyond Ukraine and Belarus, a concentration of Polish settlement was to be found, consisting partly of the descendants of Polish rebels who had been banished there in the nineteenth century. The “Polish operation” produced a significant number of victims here as well. Among these were 51 people who were arrested in Novosibirsk at the end of November and the beginning of December 1937 and found guilty of belonging to the Polish Military Organization. Forty-nine were sentenced to death at the beginning of 1938. The entire group consisted of twenty-one Poles (41 percent), eleven Belarusians (22 percent), five Russians and Ukrainians each (9.5 percent each), a total of four Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians (8 percent), three Jews (6 percent), and also one German and one Hungarian (2 percent each).³³ That the “national operations” were not directed at ethnic groups as such, but rather at collections of people among whom a high number of “spies” were suspected and “found” is further substantiated by the fact that one of these persecution campaigns was aimed primarily at ethnic Russians, namely the one based on Order No. 00493, which authorized the persecution of the so-called *Harbintsy*. This group was understood to include former employees of the Chinese

³² In the summer of 1937, they still constituted about thirty-two percent. Snyder reaches back to 1936, when they made up about forty percent. See Nikita Petrov and K.V. Skorkin, *Kto rukovodil NKVD 1934–1941*. Spravochnik, Moscow 1999, p. 495.

³³ See Aleksei Tepliakov, *Mashina terrora. OGPU-NKVD Sibiri v 1929–1941 gg.*, Moscow 2008, p. 372.

Eastern Railway, which had been under Soviet control until the mid-1930s, as well as other repatriated emigrants from the Manchurian city of Harbin.³⁴

Many ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union were, of course, targeted by Stalinist xenophobia and suspicions of collective espionage or (during the war) collaboration, resulting in selective or wholesale repression. But this was by no means the same as the National Socialist system of classifying and treating entire peoples and ethnic groups as inferior races. Snyder's categorization of the "national operations" as forms of ethnic persecution is mistaken, as is the conclusion that he draws from it: "Hitler, like Stalin, would choose Poles as the target of his first major national shooting campaign" (p. 118) – to which the not insignificant difference should be added that it was Hitler who started the Second World War with his invasion of Poland.

The "ethnicization" of Stalin's policies of persecution is a distinguishing feature of Snyder's book. Through a brute truncation of complex circumstances, he also forces the flight and expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe starting in 1945 into this category.

For example, the expulsion of three million Germans from democratic Czechoslovakia – these are Snyder's numbers – are subsumed under "Stalin's campaign of postwar ethnic cleansing" (pp. 331–33). Finally, the last chapter on late Stalinist antisemitism is also presented in this light. Given the territory and content that it covers, it runs completely afoul of the "Bloodlands" concept. As Snyder himself recognizes, only a small number of people lost their lives during the antisemitic campaigns of late Stalinism, and the most important settings of this campaign were Moscow and Prague, beyond the borders of the territory covered in the book. That the antisemitism of late Stalinism falsified European history because Stalin wanted to repress the memory of the Holocaust within the Soviet sphere of control is a weak justification for deviating from the criteria of the "Bloodlands" concept.

Late Stalinist antisemitism should be seen as an attempt to restore social conditions within the Soviet Union as they existed before the war – a restoration

34 Printed in N. Vert [Nicolas Werth] and S.V. Mironenko, *Massovye repressii v SSSR = Istoriya stalinskogo Gulaga. Konets 1920-ch – pervaya polovina 1950-ch godov*, vol. 1, Moscow 2004, pp. 281–83. For another interpretation of this issue, see Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*, Ithaca 2001, p. 343. Martin's interpretation, that the Harbinty represented the "functional equivalent" of an enemy nation, combined with the idea that the basis of "ethnic cleansing" in the Soviet Union was not Russian, but rather Soviet xenophobia, is not enough to back up the argument that this wave of persecution was based on ethnic animosity and not on political suspicions.

that also involved many other repressive measures not considered by Snyder.³⁵ The fact that a large number of Soviet Jews had international connections, such as those that had been established during the war, with official support, by the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee (JAC), and that many Soviet Jews looked upon the founding of the state of Israel with favor, made them suspicious and placed them in opposition to postwar policies aimed at cutting off foreign influences. The leading members of the JAC paid for this with their lives. According to Snyder, at the end of 1952, Stalin supposedly declared that “every Jew is a nationalist and agent of American intelligence” (p. 366). But then, as Alexander Gogun has pointed out, Snyder’s rendering of this quote is incorrect. In fact, it should read: “Every nationalistic Jew is an agent of American intelligence.”³⁶ This was probably a simple reading error, but one that supports Snyder’s interpretation. In his view, Stalin was targeting an entire ethnic group, but in fact, the dictator was referring only to the representatives of a particular political orientation within that group.

It would, nevertheless, be too forgiving to call Stalin an anti-Zionist and not an antisemite. The affair surrounding the Jewish Kremlin doctors who were charged with having plotted the murder of top-ranking patients strongly reflected age-old antisemitic canards, and a wave of antisemitic discrimination and hostility swept through the entire country. As is generally known, antisemitic measures targeted against the supposed “Doctors’ Plot” were brought to an end with Stalin’s death. No documentation has been found to support the then widespread fear that Stalin had been planning to deport Jews from the cities en masse.³⁷ This does not prevent Snyder from engaging in far-reaching speculation. “Judging by the rumors circulating at the time, Soviet citizens had no trouble imagining the possible outcomes,” states Snyder in reference to a list of provisions for persecutions and mass shootings that has never been found, adding further that “such an action, had it taken place, would have been one more in a series of national operations and ethnic deportations, which had begun in 1930 [?] with the Poles and then continued through the Great Terror and during and after the Second World War. All of this would have been in line with Stalin’s previous practice, and would have fit a traditional logic” (pp. 368–69).

³⁵ See Leonid Luks, *Zum Stalinschen Antisemitismus – Brüche und Widersprüche*, in: *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismusforschung* (1997), pp. 9–50.

³⁶ Aleksandr Gogun, *Boinia shla ne radi slavy...*, in: *Posev. Obshchestvenno-politicheskii zhurnal* (2011) no. 7, pp. 42–45, here p. 44: “Liuboi evrei-natsionalist – eto agent amerikanskoi razvedki.”

³⁷ See Gennadii Kostyrchenko, *Tainaia politika Stalina. Vlast’ i antisemitizm*, Moscow 2003, pp. 671–85.

Whether Stalin's persecutions all fit into the same logic during every phase of his reign is more than debatable. But the field of historical futurology, which Snyder enters at this point, provides room for every possible conjecture, given that what Reinhard Kosselek has called the "sources' right of veto," which normally hinders such speculations, can not function in the absence of sources. What is clear is that Snyder ends his book with an ahistorical and counterfactual image of an antisemitic mass murderer named Stalin. This is further underscored in the brief discussion of the antisemitic wave that gripped Poland in 1968, where he states, "the campaign was calculatedly unjust, deliberately provocative, and absurd in its historical vacuity. It was not, however, lethal. The antisemitic tropes of Polish communism recalled late Stalinism, and thus stereotypes familiar in Nazi Germany. There was never any plan, however, to murder Jews" (p. 374). The ideological differences between Stalinism and National Socialism, the difference between an antisemitism amalgamated with Marxist-Leninism and the racist-biological antisemitism that lay at the heart of National Socialist ideology, are downplayed with the same light touch as the difference between the murderous persecution of a small group of prominent Soviet Jews and the Shoah.

Poland between Hitler and Stalin

The sections of the book covering Stalin's ostensible ethnic terror provide bookends for the central chapters that are dedicated to the Second World War, the German occupation of Poland and the Soviet Union, the Soviet occupation of Poland, the Holocaust, and the western advance of the Red Army. To compress all of these topics into one hundred eighty pages requires the courage to paint in broad strokes and to leave a lot out, especially when one insists on depicting the fates of individuals through reports and testimonies, as Snyder does. These stories are often very informative, as, for example, in the case of the tragedy of the Polish brothers Wnuk, one of whom was murdered at Katyn by the NKVD, and the other of whom was murdered two months later by the SS during the course of the so-called Extraordinary Pacification Operation (*AB-Aktion*) in the German-occupied part of Poland. The parallelism between the Katyn murders and the *AB-Aktion* leads Snyder to conclude that Hitler's policies were fundamentally the same as Beria's (p. 147), although relationships are once again insinuated rather than systematically analyzed. In a quest to draw parallels between the German and Soviet occupations, parallels which no doubt existed, important differences regarding the scope and objectives of persecutions are either misjudged or ignored.

Snyder concentrates above all on the persecution of the Polish intelligentsia carried out by the two occupying forces, and postulates that it was the Soviets, in contrast to the Germans, who best succeeded in eliminating Poland's educated classes from their region of occupation (p. 150). He deduces this from the fact that underground networks were broken up relatively quickly there, "with activists arrested, imprisoned, and occasionally executed." Once again, the categorical and serious difference between political and racist oppression is levelled, and a Nazi goal is attributed to the Stalinist dictatorship. In point of fact, as Wanda Krystyna Roman points out, in the Soviet-occupied eastern regions "there was no uniform action taken against the Polish intellectual elite."³⁸ Unlike the National Socialists, who wanted to turn the Poles into a nation of helots, the Soviets desired to establish political conformity in the annexed areas adjacent to the Belarussian and Ukrainian Soviet Republics. Soviet persecution by no means affected only the Polish intelligentsia in these ethnically-mixed regions. In the period between the German occupation of the eastern Polish regions and the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Soviet forces arrested 42,948 ethnic Poles, 24,186 Ukrainians, 23,590 Jews, and 8,901 Belarussians, as well as an additional 8,500 people for whom no national identity was provided. Of these totals, the Poles numbered almost exactly 40 percent, the Ukrainians 22.6 percent, the Jews 22 percent, the Belarussians 7.5 percent, and those of unknown national origin numbered 7.9 percent.³⁹ In the majority of cases, prison sentences were handed down. Nonetheless, in the summer of 1941, in view of the advance of German troops, thousands of political prisoners were murdered in the prisons by the NKVD. In addition, more than three hundred thousand residents of the eastern Polish regions were deported into the interior of the Soviet Union.⁴⁰ Arrests were not therefore directed against Polish resistance networks alone, but were equally directed at both real and imagined Ukrainian nationalists, members of Zionist associations, and others who were suspected to be political opponents.

The differences between the persecutions, especially with respect to their magnitudes, were considerably greater than what is suggested in the book. At one point in the German edition, Snyder discusses the differences between Polish war experiences and Polish-Jewish war experiences: "Non-Jewish Poles suffered

³⁸ Wanda Krystyna Roman, *Die sowjetische Okkupation der polnischen Ostgebiete 1939 bis 1941*, in: Bernhard Chiari (ed.), *Die polnische Heimatarmee. Geschichte und Mythos der Armia Krajowa seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Munich 2003, pp. 87–109, here p. 99.

³⁹ My own calculations, based on figures provided in O.A. Gorlanov/Arsenii B. Roginskii, *Ob arestach v zapadnykh oblastiach Belorussii i Ukrainy v 1939–1941 gg.*, in: Aleksandr Gurianov (sost.), *Repressii protiv poliakov i pol'skich grazhdan*, Moscow 1997, pp. 77–113, here p. 89.

⁴⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 113.

horribly from both German and Soviet occupations, but comparably from each” (p. 278). In the German translation, Snyder’s concluding phrase was exaggeratedly translated as “in ungefähr dem gleichen Masse,” which means “in roughly equal amounts.” This misleading formulation in the German edition is contradicted by numbers that Snyder cites elsewhere: “Poland probably lost about a million non-Jewish civilians to the Germans and about a hundred thousand more to the Soviets. Perhaps another million Poles died as a result of mistreatment and as casualties of war.” (p. 406) These figures are not very precise, but nonetheless provide information about the different dimensions of the persecution. Even if one accepts the questionable exclusion of Jewish victims, the number of deaths attributed to National Socialist persecutions still far outnumbered the deaths that resulted from the Soviet occupation. Majewski speaks of 1.75 million victims who were “the direct result of policies of annihilation,” in addition to 2.7 million murdered Polish Jews.⁴¹ Dieter Pohl estimates that 4.5 to 5 million Polish citizens (Jews and non-Jews) died as a result of German occupation policies, while Soviet victims numbered between one hundred and two hundred thousand, figures that are corroborated by the latest Polish research.⁴²

Against this background, Snyder’s assertion that Polish Jews had every reason to prefer the Soviets to the Germans and to see the Red Army as their liberators, while non-Jewish Poles preferred the opposite because of their prior experience with persecution, seems questionable. As reprehensible and brutal as Stalin’s regime was in Poland, it did not compare to the dimensions of mass murder that the Hitler regime undertook, either before or after the German-Soviet war.⁴³ Following this questionable emphasis, Snyder expresses understanding for the Armia Krajowa’s (AK) reluctance to supply weapons to a Ghetto resistance that was suspected of Soviet-friendly sympathies: “There were hardly any

41 Piotr Majewski, *Nationalsozialistische-Unterdrückungsmaßnahmen im Generalgouvernement während der Besetzung*, in: Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk (ed.), *Polen unter deutscher und sowjetischer Besetzung 1939–1945*, Osnabrück 2009, pp. 173–95, here p. 193.

42 See Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische und stalinistische Massenverbrechen: Überlegungen zum wissenschaftlichen Vergleich*, in: Jürgen Zarusky (ed.), *Stalin und die Deutschen. Neue Beiträge der Forschung*, Munich 2006, pp. 253–63, here p. 257. In regard to the victims of Stalinism, these figures are also supported by the Russian specialist Aleksandr Gur’janov [Gur’ianov], *Die sowjetische Repressionspolitik in den besetzten polnischen Ostgebieten 1939–1941*, in: Młynarczyk (ed.), *Polen unter deutscher und sowjetischer Besetzung*, pp. 217–32; and also in his contributions to the same, *Repressii protiv poliakov i pol’skich grazhdan*. For current discussions about Polish research on the victims of both occupations, see Wojciech Materski/Tomasz Szarota (eds.), *Polska 1939–1945. Straty osobowe i ofiary represji pod dwiema okupacjami*, Warsaw 2009.

43 See Łukasz Kamiński, *Stalinism in Poland, 1944–1956*, in: Kevin McDermott/Matthew Stibbe (eds.), *Stalinist Terror in Eastern Europe*, Manchester 2010, pp. 78–97.

circumstances that would seem to justify a Polish independence organization arming Communists inside Poland.” (p. 284) In view of the fact that the weapons shipment that took place at the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943 consisted of merely several dozen pistols and grenades for a couple of hundred youths, who, finding themselves in a desperate situation, had decided not to die without a fight, this assessment is highly questionable. The ghetto resistance fighters hardly presented a danger to Polish independence. One of their commanders, Marek Edelman, a member of the Jewish-Socialist “Bund,” would later become a figurehead of the Solidarity movement.⁴⁴

The elephant in the room here is Polish antisemitism. The AK's relations with Jews could hardly have been free of the stereotypes and attitudes that were common in Poland before the war.⁴⁵ Snyder excludes this here as much as possible. He refers only to help that the resistance provided to persecuted Jews, and the common struggle of survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the AK in the Warsaw Uprising, undoubtedly historically significant events, to be sure. Above all, assistance provided under the threat of the death penalty, and in particular, the help to Jews that was organized by the Council for the Support of Jews (Code-name: *Żegota*) under the auspices of the Polish government-in-exile after 1942 is a glorious chapter in the story of the Polish resistance. But those who saved Jews embodied only one of its currents. A deeply-ingrained antisemitism held sway in the extreme rightist National Armed Forces (NSZ) in particular, but also in the various units of the AK. Snyder hardly mentions this,⁴⁶ emphasizing instead the Polish-Jewish solidarity of the Warsaw Uprising. Even the NSZ had Jewish fighters, he points out, while providing no information about whether these individuals were open about their Jewish identity (p. 302). It would certainly not have been advisable, because, according to the sensational and hotly debated (in Poland) research by the journalist Michał Czichy of the *Gazeta Wyborcza*, a series of murders of Jews was perpetrated by insurgents of the NSZ as well as the AK.⁴⁷ Those who committed the murders did not number more than about a dozen, and

⁴⁴ See Witold Bereś/Krzysztof Burnetko, Marek Edelman berichtet, Berlin 2009.

⁴⁵ See Frank Golczewski, Die Heimatarmee und die Juden, in: Chiari (ed.), Die polnische Heimatarmee, pp. 635–76.

⁴⁶ Only mentioned tersely on page 293: “Over the course of 1943, units of the Home Army sometimes shot armed Jews in the countryside as bandits. In a few cases, Home Army soldiers killed Jews in order to steal their property. On the other hand, the Home Army did execute Poles who turned in Jews or tried to blackmail them.”

⁴⁷ See Barbara Engelking/Helga Hirsch (eds.), Unbequeme Wahrheiten. Polen und sein Verhältnis zu den Juden, Frankfurt a.M. 2008, pp. 49–86. Marek Edelman, a surviving commander of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, indicates that a unit of the AK threatened to shoot him, but stresses

these deeds were not typical features of the uprising. Nonetheless, Polish-Jewish relations were nowhere near as harmonious and unproblematic as Snyder presents them.

This applies also to the postwar period, when antisemitism appeared in the form of a series of pogroms, of which the most notorious occurred in Kielce on 4 July 1946. The exact number of victims is still unknown, though it is estimated at between five hundred and fifteen hundred.⁴⁸ In the chapter on Stalinist antisemitism, Snyder focuses extensively on the issue of Jews and antisemitism in the leadership of the Polish Communist Party after the war, but ignores popular hostility toward Jews and its violent manifestations; one searches the index in vain for the place name “Kielce.” The impression that Stalinism was the sole heir of antisemitism in Europe after 1945 is reflected in the assertion that “Jews were actually deported *to* Poland: about one hundred thousand from the Soviet Union” (p. 351). In fact, this was the result of a Soviet-Polish repatriation treaty of 6 July 1945, which offered Poles and Polish Jews who lived in the Soviet Union the opportunity to forfeit their Soviet citizenship and return to their homeland. By 1949, 230,700 Jews had taken advantage of this offer.⁴⁹ Very few actually remained in Poland, however. The confrontation with the aftermath of National Socialism’s practically complete annihilation of Jewish existence, and the fear of violent antisemitic riots, led Jewish refugees to leave Eastern Europe starting in 1946 and to fill the Displaced Persons camps, mainly in the American occupation zone in Germany.

The German-Soviet War

There can be no doubt that the violence of the Second World War reached its culmination in the German-Soviet War. According to Snyder, 22 June 1941 was “the beginning of a calamity that defies description” (p. 155). Snyder nevertheless describes the elements of this catastrophe with great clarity: the mass starvation of Soviet prisoners, the starvation of civilians, the merciless blockade of Leningrad, the mass shootings with which the Holocaust began, and the despicable

that the AK was a heterogeneous organization that harbored a variety of ideological beliefs and attitudes, see Bereś/Burnetko, Marek Edelman berichtet, p. 285.

⁴⁸ See Jan Tomasz Gross, *Fear. Anti-Semitism in Poland after Auschwitz*, New York 2006, p. 28.

⁴⁹ See Yosef Litvak, *Polish-Jewish Refugees Repatriated from the Soviet Union at the End of the Second World War and Afterwards*, in: Norman Davies/Antony Polonsky (eds.), *Jews in Eastern Poland and the USSR, 1939–1946*, London 1991, pp. 227–39, here p. 235.

strategies that could result in anti-partisan warfare becoming a synonym for mass murder. It is difficult to identify an interpretive framework within the wealth of material that he presents with such narrative energy. But here also Snyder promotes several ideas that place the role of the Soviet Union in the Second World War in question. Snyder does approach the Soviet victims of National Socialist terror with great empathy, indeed, with much more empathy than he treats combatants of the Red Army and the partisan movement.

In general, he greatly downplays the political-military significance of the struggle on the primary front of the Second World War. This relates closely to his interpretation of the German plan of attack and the first phase of the war.

In Snyder's account, the German campaign in Russia is presented from the beginning as a story of failure that was to be compensated for with the Holocaust. The four utopias that were bound together with the invasion of the Soviet Union – “a lightning victory that would destroy the Soviet Union in weeks”; a “Hunger Plan that would starve thirty million people in months”; “a Final Solution that would eliminate European Jews after the war” (meant here are the abundantly unclear deportation plans); and a “Generalplan Ost that would make of the western Soviet Union a German colony” – had all become impossible by the end of the year. Hitler therefore reformulated the war's aims “such that the physical extermination of the Jews became the priority” (p. 187).

Here the author of *Bloodlands* presents a diverse set of plans as though they all belonged to a single master project. Of course these were concepts that in some manner merged with one another in National Socialist thinking, but they did not constitute the “comprehensive package” that Snyder presents. Although the destruction of a large part of the Soviet military and a rapid advance aimed at the capture of Moscow were central goals of “Operation Barbarossa” in 1941, the other goals can be more accurately placed either in the category of long-term planning or in the category of murderous means to an end.

The plans regarding food supplies that were devised leading up to the invasion, which assumed the starvation of “tens of million” Soviet citizens, have been the subject of some controversy in recent years. Snyder once again provides no indication that his version of these events is a matter of dispute. Proponents of the thesis of a hunger plan that was intentionally aimed at mass extermination⁵⁰ have been countered with the strong argument that it was not so much a plan as a calculation. With the exception of Leningrad, they argue, famine was not deployed as a weapon, but rather accepted as the consequence of the intended

50 This argument is made by Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde. Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941–1944*, Hamburg 2000, pp. 46–59, 1127–32.

pillage.⁵¹ Snyder treats the hunger plan as a project for the mass murder of about 30 million people, and interprets the fact that this numerical goal was not, in the end, met as a failure, notwithstanding the horrible death by starvation of two-thirds of the Red Army soldiers who had been taken as prisoners-of-war by the Germans. But to the German food planners, this was not so much a murder program as it was a desire to fulfill the needs of the German troops and the home front. They accepted the death by starvation of countless people as an inevitability, but extermination quotas did not exist.

For Snyder, “hunger plan” and “Generalplan Ost” stand together in a functional correlation. However, the “Generalplan” as it pertained to the Soviet Union first came into being shortly after the invasion and, until September 1942, existed in different versions. Helmut Heiber describes it as the product of a phase shaped by the euphoria of victory, when “Eastern Europe experts, and especially the Eastern Europe fantasists, imagined themselves living in a world after Barbarossa.”⁵² This was planning for the future that in no way possessed the same degree of official validity as the strategic planning for the Blitzkrieg.

It was similar to “ideas for a final solution” that imagined the deportation of the Jews to the eastern Soviet Union, which, like the earlier Madagascar Plan, focused on a region in which people who were unprepared and poorly equipped would face miserable chances of survival.

Following Martin Broszat, who developed his thinking on the genesis of the Final Solution in a well-known essay published in 1977, many historians regard the convergence of antisemitic deportation initiatives and difficulties on the Eastern Front as the circumstance that unleashed the systematic murder of all the Jews in the National Socialist sphere of influence.⁵³

Research on this topic of the immediate causes of the Shoah has since expanded and diversified. Snyder’s characterization of the mass murder of the Jews as a consequence of an unrealized German victory over the Soviet Union, as a kind of ersatz war, stands at an extreme position on the scale of possible interpretations. He is, however, not the only advocate of this thesis. One also finds it in Sebastian Haffner’s *The Meaning of Hitler*, originally published in German in

51 See Johannes Hürter, *Hitlers Heerführer. Die deutschen Oberbefehlshaber im Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion*, Munich 2006, p. 491.

52 Helmut Heiber, *Der Generalplan Ost. Dokumentation*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 6 (1958), pp. 281–325, here p. 282.

53 See Martin Broszat, *Hitler und die Genesis der “Endlösung.”* Aus Anlaß der Thesen von David Irving, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 25 (1977), pp. 739–75. See also, for example, the account in Peter Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler*, Munich 2008, pp. 559–71, which sums up the author’s relevant earlier research.

1978.⁵⁴ But Snyder extends this theory even further so as to include an additional component, the shifting of genocidal policies from the Slavs onto the Jews. He writes:

As the war turned Stalin's way, Hitler recast its purpose. The plan had been to destroy the Soviet Union and then eliminate the Jews. Now, as the destruction of the Soviet Union was indefinitely delayed, the utter extermination of the Jews became a wartime policy. The menace henceforth was less the Slavic masses and their supposed Jewish overlords, and more the Jews as such. In 1942, propaganda against Slavs would ease, as more of them came to work in the Reich. Hitler's decision to kill Jews (rather than exploit their labor) was presumably facilitated by his simultaneous decision to exploit the labor of Slavs (rather than kill them). These moves signified an abandonment of most of the initial assumptions about the course of the war, although of course Hitler would never have admitted that. But the mass killing of Jews at least looked consistent with the initial vision of a frontier empire in the East. (pp. 214–15)

Paradoxically, by taking this approach, Snyder positions himself closely to Soviet-promulgated historiography, which also regarded “the” Generalplan Ost as a fixed plan for genocide that was primarily intended for the Slavic populations,⁵⁵ although, to be more precise, he leans here on the interpretation developed by the Polish historian Czesław Madajczyk. In Snyder's version, the antisemitic component of National Socialism is reduced to a secondary factor, and the German-Soviet war in its early stage is presented not merely as unpromising for the Germans, but as lost. The author speaks of a “defensive war” waged by the Germans starting at the end of 1941 (p. 216), and later he places the turning point in 1942, without explanation, and declares that “Germany would kill all the Jews because the war was lost.” (p. 219)

Snyder's theory contains a whole series of problems. First, as he himself acknowledges, there is no documentary basis for his assumptions about Hitler's motives. Second, his presentation of military developments is overly general and superficial. Thus, for example, Snyder's assertion that “from late July 1941 Jews had been murdered as the envisaged lightning victory failed to materialize” (p. 215) is difficult to square with the assessment made by the German army high command on 28 July 1941 that “the majority of the operational Russian army has been destroyed.” And even though some senior military and political officials began to worry in August 1941 that a victory over the Soviet Union would not be

⁵⁴ See Sebastian Haffner, *The Meaning of Hitler*, Translated by Ewald Osers, Cambridge/MA 1979, p. 121.

⁵⁵ See Il'ja Al'tman, *Opfer des Hasses. Der Holocaust in der UdSSR 1941–1945*, Gleichen 2008, pp. 41–45.

as easy as expected,⁵⁶ the German forces were still chalking up victories. In the battle of encirclement at Kiev on 26 September 1941, a German victory led to the capture of half a million soldiers of the Red Army, the majority of whom did not survive their captivity. Three days after this victory, the massacre of more than thirty thousand Kiev Jews began at Babi Yar. The first serious defeat suffered by the Wehrmacht came at the beginning of December before Moscow, sparing its inhabitants the fate suffered by those of Leningrad. The German spearheads were not defeated until they reached the immediate vicinity of the city.

For the Soviet leadership, the situation was extremely critical. In mid-October, it had been decided to evacuate government offices to Kuybyshev (Samara) on the Volga. If necessary, Stalin, too, was supposed to go, but he remained in Moscow for the time being. Therefore, it is quite absurd for Snyder to claim that Stalin organized “his own victory celebrations” on 7 November 1941 (p. 226). The seventh of November was the anniversary of the revolution. On the sixth, Stalin had spoken with forced optimism about the failure of the German blitzkrieg during a celebratory meeting of the Moscow Soviet, which was held in the “Mayakovskaya” metro station because of the danger of German air attacks. He noted that Soviet power – in contrast to the hopes of the German leadership – had not collapsed, and that Germany had failed to form a wartime coalition with the United States and Britain against the Soviet Union – an expression of the dictator’s clouded view of the reality of the international situation as well as of his fear of encirclement. Originating also in the kingdom of propaganda fairy tales were his casualty figures, which he cited at about four hundred thousand for his side, a number that had been exceeded during the course of the battle of Kiev alone. On the other hand, claimed Stalin, the enemy had lost more than four and a half million men, a number that exceeded the Germans’ total losses for the entire war.⁵⁷ The soldiers who paraded on Red Square the next day did not have time to bask in the glory of victory, because they had to take their positions in defense of Moscow immediately after the end of the ceremony.

The actual development of the Holocaust also does not correspond to Snyder’s narrative, according to which problems with the Blitzkrieg led to the comprehensive murder of the Soviet Jews, and also according to which the addition of the United States to the anti-Hitler coalition in December 1941 led to the liquidation of all Jews in the entire Nazi sphere of influence. Already in his procla-

⁵⁶ Christian Hartmann, *Wehrmacht im Ostkrieg. Front und militärisches Hinterland 1941/42*, Munich 2009, p. 283. This is also the source of the above quote.

⁵⁷ See J.W. Stalin, *Der 24. Jahrestag der großen sozialistischen Oktoberrevolution*, in: Stalin, *Werke*, Dortmund 1976, vol. 14, pp. 136–44.

mation to the German people on 22 June 1941, Hitler justified his invasion of the Soviet Union, among other reasons, on the basis of a supposed “conspiracy of the Jewish-Anglo-Saxon warmongers and the similarly Jewish rulers of Moscow’s Bolshevik command center.”⁵⁸ The fact that this motif was included in his public justification for declaring war on the United States on 12 December 1941, and that he once more referred to his “prophesy” of 30 January 1939 that the next world war would lead to the extermination of the Jews, does not carry the significance that Snyder attaches to it (p. 214). Hitler and other leading figures of the National Socialist regime had made many similar statements since 22 June 1941. As Peter Longerich has noted, the speech indicated “neither a political change nor a fundamental decision with regard to Jewish policy, but it was simply another call to expand and accelerate the mass murder of Jews, a process that had already been underway for months.”⁵⁹

The mass murder of Jews had been a part of the campaign against the Soviet Union from the beginning. Thousands of Jews, men as well as women and children, died in the pogroms that had been promoted by the Germans in the Baltic states and in Ukraine immediately after the invasion had begun. Already on 28 June 1941, Heydrich’s Operational Order No. 8 presented an outline calling for the elimination from within the ranks of Soviet POWs of “unacceptable elements” who were to be shot by Police commandos, including “all Jews.”⁶⁰ Heydrich’s instruction to the *Einsatzgruppen* of the Security Police and the SD on 2 July 1941, which referred to “Jews in party and state positions,” was also nothing other than an order to murder Jews.⁶¹ Moreover there is a not insignificant amount of evidence for shootings of Jews by the SS and police apparatus during the time before August 1941 in which the victims were not only functionaries.⁶² Escalation and systematization of a murder campaign fueled by antisemitic hatred, not a change of course influenced by outside circumstances, is what determined developments in the summer and fall of 1941.

58 Max Domarus, Hitler. Reden und Proklamationen 1932–1945, vol. 2, Würzburg 1963, pp. 1726–32, here p. 1731.

59 Longerich, Himmler, p. 570.

60 Printed in: Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933–1945, vol. 7: Sowjetunion mit annektierten Gebieten I, ed. by Bert Hoppe and Hiltrun Glass, Munich 2011, pp. 131–33.

61 Helmut Krausnick/Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges. Die Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD 1938–1942, Stuttgart 1981, p. 157.

62 Relevant supporting documents can be found in Helmut Krausnick, Hitler und die Befehle an die Einsatzgruppen im Sommer 1941, in: Eberhard Jäckel/Jürgen Rohwer (eds.), Der Mord an den Juden im Zweiten Weltkrieg, Frankfurt a.M. 1987, pp. 88–106.

Snyder's all too weak illumination of National Socialist antisemitism is accompanied by an underestimation of the dimensions and the significance of the German-Soviet war.

This begins with his casualty numbers, which are far too low. "The engagement of the Wehrmacht (and its allies) with the Red Army killed more than ten million soldiers, not to speak of the comparable number of civilians who died in the fight" (p. 155). In fact, according to the official data compiled during the Gorbachev era, the losses of the Red Army alone exceeded eleven million, and that of the civilian population fifteen million.⁶³ Snyder calls these numbers into question because he claims that they were based on "demographic projections," but he does not find it necessary to closely examine the methods by which the number of victims was calculated. In contrast, he does stress that the figures refer to Soviets and not Russians. Numbers for the latter must have been smaller, given that they did not include figures for Belarusians and Ukrainians. Evidently, the Soviet war experience, in Snyder's view, should be evaluated according to state boundaries as they were established after 1990 (p. 402), a completely ahistorical position. A downright trivialization is the assertion that the occupied regions accounted for "not very much of the Soviet Union," and that the people who lived there were not of decisive importance to the Soviet system (p. 182). In fact, these regions accounted for around 60 million people, about one third of the Soviet population, and a significant amount of the most fertile agricultural land as well as a series of the most important industrial centers. Snyder covers several of the most dramatic and bloody events of the war with similar nonchalance. In regard to the summer offensive of 1942 and the six-month battle of Stalingrad, which is commonly accepted as the turning point of the war, and which accounted for at least seven hundred thousand casualties, Snyder can think of nothing more to say than the following two sentences: "Army Group South was supposed to secure the Volga River and the oil supplies of the Caucasus. Some of its forces reached the Volga in August 1942, but were unable to take Stalingrad." In his opinion, 1942 saw "the last major German offensive in the eastern front" (p. 241). He says nothing about the Battle of Kursk in the summer of 1943, which was the largest tank battle in history.

Snyder concentrates exclusively on occupation policy and completely excludes the victims of the combat operations of the war of aggression, whether military personnel or civilians.⁶⁴ Only in this way can he make the assertion that Soviet

⁶³ See Christian Hartmann, *Unternehmen Barbarossa. Der deutsche Krieg im Osten 1941–1945*, Munich 2011, p. 115.

⁶⁴ Except for victims of the German air attacks carried out during the war in Poland. See Snyder, *Bloodlands*, pp. 119–20.

Russia, only a small part of which was occupied – Snyder refers here to land area rather than to population settlement – was “more distant from the experience of the war” than the Baltics, Belarus, or the Ukraine (p. 336).

Indeed, Snyder had originally included Leningrad and the million victims who died there as result of the blockade in the “Bloodlands” concept, but now he apparently loses sight of them.

Nothing is said in *Bloodlands* about the civilian population of the completely destroyed city of Stalingrad, and there is also no mention of the roughly sixteen million people who fled or were evacuated eastward from the areas that were endangered by the German invasion.⁶⁵

Many of these people, but also many who lived east of the front, had relatives and friends who lived in the occupation zone, and were extremely apprehensive about their fate. Combat soldiers who were sent to the front could not be recruited from territories that had fallen under enemy occupation, but rather, had to come from the interior of the entire Soviet Union.

Of course the war was experienced differently in the occupied areas, on the front, and in the hinterland, but widows and orphans could be found in abundance everywhere in the Soviet Union – including in those areas that Snyder describes as having been “more distant from the experience of the war.”

Especially problematic is his misjudgment of the role of Soviet partisans, whose legitimacy he disputes on principle: “partisan warfare was (and is) illegal, since it undermines the convention of uniformed armies directing violence against each other rather than against surrounding populations” (p. 233). Setting aside the fact that the laws of war are more complicated than Snyder suggests, the attribution of responsibility is turned on its head here.

As Snyder himself posits, including through his overdrawn Hunger Plan thesis, German planning was predicated on a war against the civilian population. The laws of war were ignored or broken in every conceivable way. Not only Stalin’s appeal of July 1941 was decisive for the emergence of the partisan movement. Early partisan groups had been formed by, among others, scattered Red Army soldiers who would have faced starvation had they become prisoners of war, or would have faced summary execution had they been picked up by German units after the expiration of the deadline for surrendering themselves.⁶⁶ The question as to whether one had not just the right but perhaps even the obligation to take up arms against a mass-murdering invader, which

⁶⁵ For more on these evacuations, see Rebecca Manley, *To the Tashkent Station. Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War*, Ithaca 2009.

⁶⁶ See Hürter, *Hitlers Heerführer*, pp. 404–41.

Snyder implicitly affirms in regard to the partisan groups of the *Armia Krajowa*, he does not even ask in regard to the Soviet partisans. Not only are they indiscriminately described as Stalin's cooperating partners, they are placed on the same level as the perpetrators of the German war of annihilation: "Both used terror in the absence of reliable material or moral inducements to loyalty. [...] Germans killed Jews as partisans, and many Jews became partisans. The Jews who became partisans were serving the Soviet regime, and were taking part in a Soviet policy to bring down retribution upon civilians." The partisan war in Belarus was a "perversely" interactive effort on the part of Hitler and Stalin: "Both ignored the laws of war and escalated the conflict behind the front lines." (pp. 249–50)

As with every oversimplified mode of explanation, this one too goes against the rules of historical fairness. The distinction between invaders and defenders dissolves here into nothingness, and persecuted Jews are depicted, in a more than questionable manner, as Stalinists and indirect accomplices of National Socialist terror. One thing is certain, namely that in Belarus, escape into the forests and to the partisans offered young male Jews an opportunity for survival that was otherwise not available. Snyder, however, presents the following interpretation of this fact. In 1941, while the partisans were still weak, and while the main targets of German "retribution operations" were Jews in the villages, "most Jews in the Minsk ghetto were in no hurry to escape to the forest. In Minsk, despite all of its horrors, they were at least at home. Despite the regular mass killings, no fewer than half of Minsk's Jews were still alive as 1942 began" (p. 235). Notwithstanding the inappropriately flippant, almost cynical tone, it should be noted that "most of the Jews in the Minsk ghetto" never had a real chance to flee into the forests. More than questionable is Snyder's conclusion that, after mid-1942, German actions were actually intended "to kill Belarusian civilians as well as Belarusian Jews" (p. 242). Snyder does not seem to be bothered by the story of the village of Borki, which he himself recounts. Suspected of harboring partisans, Borki was subjected to an extermination operation in September 1942. Police Battalion 310, which shot 700 people in the operation, spared 104 of the villagers, who were classified as "reliable." No Jew within the National Socialist sphere of influence could have achieved this distinction. Snyder fails here to recognize the point that Soviet war journalist Vasily Grossman had already made at the end of 1943: the Shoah was something entirely different than the general terror of the occupation, it was an extermination program.⁶⁷ This was true of Belarus, where the entire

⁶⁷ See Wassili Grossman, *Ukraine ohne Juden*. Aus dem Russischen übertragen und eingeleitet von Jürgen Zarusky, in: Johannes Hürter/Jürgen Zarusky (eds.), *Besatzung, Kollaboration, Holo-*

population had more to fear from the German occupation as anywhere else, aside from besieged Leningrad. About 1.6 to 1.7 million of the 10 million inhabitants of Belarus perished. The majority of the victims were not Jews, but among the Jews only about five percent survived.

Snyder emphasizes that “the Soviet partisans also contributed to the total number of fatalities.” As evidence, he cites a statistic according to which, until January 1944, a total of 17,431 people were killed as traitors on Belarusian territory, and Snyder adds to these tens of thousands killed in other operations. While these additional operations remain unspecified, he does include the deportations carried out by the NKVD during the years 1939 to 1941 (p. 251). This grouping together of entirely dissimilar events shows that he is unwilling to see Soviet citizens who defended themselves against the German occupation as anything other than Stalinist executioners. He characterizes the partisans’ victims as “unarmed participants in the civilian administration,” small-town mayors, teachers, etc. (p. 238). The functions and actions of these civilians, who are presented as completely harmless, are not analyzed further. In addition, the fact that Snyder’s figure for those killed by the partisans amounts to one, two, or at most three percent of the number killed by the German occupation seems to provide no reason for him to call his stimulus-response model into question. It is well known that the partisan war was barbarous, and nothing would be more wrong than to romanticize it.⁶⁸ But Snyder’s assessment is not only based on an extremely superficial view, it is also illogical, given that he had already discussed the genocidal intentions of the German invasion of the Soviet Union. It is not clear why these German genocidal intentions should be considered to have been dependent on the actions of the Soviet partisans. That might have been true in certain situations, but certainly not when seen as a whole. The responsibility for the terror of the occupation should, therefore, be placed where it belongs.

In contrast to the pattern set out by Snyder, in which every action carried out by the Soviet side against the National Socialist regime resulted in an intensified persecution of the Jews under Nazi control, we can observe that for the Jews of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and the Red Army offered the most important and almost the only opportunity for survival. Of the few Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust, the largest group were those who fled into Soviet territory, and a

caust. *Neue Studien zur Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden*, Munich 2008, pp. 189–200.

⁶⁸ One volume of primary documents that leaves a particularly strong impression is Bogdan Muisal (ed.), *Sowjetische Partisanen in Weißrußland. Innenansichten aus dem Gebiet Baranoviči 1941–1944. Eine Dokumentation*, Munich 2004.

good portion of the Belarusian Jews who survived managed to save themselves by fleeing to the partisans. Those who survived in hiding could only breath a sigh of relief after the Red Army had expelled the German occupiers out of the “Bloodlands” and other Eastern European regions. The Red Army liberated a large number of concentration camps and other places in which Jews had been detained in Eastern Europe, from Auschwitz to the ghettos in Budapest and Theresienstadt. And ultimately, the military pressure exerted by the Red Army placed an indirect brake on the process of extermination, as the German war economy was dependent on workers, and Jews, who took part in the production of important military goods, were at least temporarily spared. That it was not, first and foremost, the democratic powers that ended the Holocaust, but rather the Red Army, for which it was not a strategic goal, but the advance of which nonetheless led everywhere to the dismantling of the racist power structures installed by the National Socialist regime and its collaborators, but also to the (re-)establishment of communist power structures, is not easy to accept when one expects history to provide simple moral lessons and unambiguous touchstones for political identification. The task of the historian should be to make this ambivalence understandable. Snyder’s book does not do it justice.

The “Bloodlands” Construct

The “Bloodlands” are a constructed historical landscape. This construct consists of descriptions of politically motivated mass crimes assembled by the author without a clear analytical framework. The book’s concept of space is in many respects inconsistent. Thus, as Dieter Pohl has already critically pointed out, Snyder includes the western half of Poland, which was relatively untouched by Stalinist terror, while he excludes the North Caucasus, where both Stalinist policies of starvation and terror and National Socialist occupation were imposed.⁶⁹ Above all, the “Bloodlands” concept projects a certain set of events onto a geographical space that did not, as a whole, experience those events, while at the same time, the geographical and political contexts of certain events are severed. For example, the Ukrainian famine of 1932 and 1933 has to be seen in connection with similar emergency situations in other regions of the Soviet Union that lay

⁶⁹ See Dieter Pohl, *Vernichtungskrieg. Der Feldzug gegen die Sowjetunion 1941–1944 im globalen Kontext*, in: *Einsicht 06. Bulletin des Fritz Bauer Instituts* (Herbst 2011), pp. 16–31, here p. 18, note 14.

beyond the reach of the “Bloodlands,” while Poland, which is included within the “Bloodlands,” was not affected by the famine. The same applies to the Great Terror of 1937 and 1938. A large majority of the victims of the Holocaust stemmed from the so-called Bloodlands, and Snyder is right to call attention to this. But Snyder’s intention, emphasized in his final chapter, to turn casualty statistics “back into people” (p. 408) is undermined when, for example, he places Auschwitz toward the bottom of a list that idiosyncratically ranks the sites of industrial mass killing (p. 383). Most notably, the historically singular will to extermination that stood behind the Holocaust becomes less understandable when one considers only the massacres that took place in the major areas of Jewish settlement in Europe and loses sight of the extermination of small Jewish communities, indeed of the intention to exterminate every last Jew in the German sphere of influence. The concept is also inconsistent because certain events that are included either cannot be classified as mass violence, or they did not take place within the specified territory of the “Bloodlands.” These would include, in particular, late Stalinist antisemitism, which Snyder projects forward beyond the death of Stalin and beyond the conclusion of the anti-Jewish campaign that ended with Stalin’s death. Here it becomes apparent that the author is more concerned about pushing a certain narrative than analyzing a concrete geographic space. This explains also why he ignores a number of significant factors: the concentration camps, the gulags and other detention centers – without which totalitarian rule would be unthinkable – and also the deportation of millions of Poles and Soviet citizens to Germany as forced laborers, given that Germany did not consider the war lost in 1941, but rather looked to strengthen its war economy with a labor force drawn in large part from the “Bloodlands.”

If not so much the geographic space itself, but rather, a narrative constituted through that geographic space occupies the center of the book, one should question that narrative’s structure. One of the book’s main features is that the regimes and their methods of persecution are presented as approximating one another. Stalinist mass crimes, in particular, are presented as forms of ethnic persecution, and Stalin’s very real antisemitism is carried forward in a speculative fashion beyond the death of the dictator into an eliminationist phase.

In this way, a close ideological relationship between the dictators is insinuated, although Snyder avoids a concrete analysis of their ideologies. Even though he alludes to their differences, he does not – in a manner very much different from, say, Hannah Arendt – question how these differences shaped their images of their enemies or their methods of persecution. “The transformations envisioned by both Hitler and Stalin were economic,” Snyder states. Their ideologies arose from economic interests, which, for both dictators, revolved around the control of territory (pp. 394–95). Snyder omits concrete explanations of how, for

instance, the Great Terror or the Holocaust fit into this economic approach. If anything, this approach is an empty formula that is supposed to paper over problems created by the search for similarities.

Such similarities are particularly stressed in regard to Poland. In this case, Snyder does not properly present the relationship between Stalinist terror and the monstrous violence of the German occupation, violence that was the fruit, not least, of the racist ideology of National Socialism, an ideology that Snyder fails to adequately describe in its specifics. This has consequences for his interpretation of how the war unfolded. Snyder correctly points out that most Poles viewed liberation from the German occupation by the Red Army with mixed feelings, but he does not entirely portray the complexity of the situation when he declares that the Soviet summer offensive of 1944 “meant the second incursion of the Red Army into Polish territory during the Second World War” (p. 278). The Red Army, without question, brought about the Sovietization of Poland, but it also brought to an end a racist regime the brutality of which was unparalleled. It was a stage on the road to defeating the National Socialist regime, which had subjected the majority of Europe to its murderous reign (and which still had millions of Soviet citizens, miserably treated prisoners of war, and forced laborers in its clutches).

Snyder’s analysis is too narrow here, because his narrative is very much focused on Poland, the heart of the “Bloodlands.” The Poles are above all presented by Snyder in the last chapter as the real martyrs of the “bloody earth” (pp. 405–06), in Poland as well as in the Soviet Union. “Beyond Poland, the extent of Polish suffering is underappreciated,” he writes with due fairness, given that a mutual appreciation of the trauma of totalitarianism and the war is still very much underdeveloped among the peoples of Europe. In a similar way, the extent of Russian suffering is not fully appreciated outside of Russia, but the same is also true, for example, of the suffering of Ukrainians and Belarusians, the story of which has by no means been exhausted by the facts that Snyder lays out. To this day, some groups have to struggle to get the history of their persecution recognized, such as the Sinti and Roma, who were murdered in large numbers by the National Socialist regime. They do not appear in *Bloodlands* at all.⁷⁰

On Snyder’s balance sheet, the victims of the wars of aggression, and especially of the war against the Soviet Union – whether military or civilian – do not

70 For more on the persecution of Roma in the region on which Snyder focuses, see Michael Zimmermann, *Rassenutopie und Genozid. Die nationalsozialistische “Lösung der Zigeunerfrage,”* Hamburg 1996, pp. 259–83; Martin Holler, *Der nationalsozialistische Völkermord an den Roma in der besetzten Sowjetunion (1941–1944). Gutachten für das Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma,* Heidelberg 2009.

register if they died as a result of combat operations. One might conclude that his book is not really about all of the victims of totalitarianism and war, and not even about all of those in the “Bloodlands,” but rather about a selection of victims chosen by the author. The exclusive focus on the experience of occupation speaks more to the Polish reality than it does to the Soviet one. Polish units fought side by side with the Allies in the West, in Italy, for example, but after the short war of 1939, aside from the partisan activities of Operation Burza (Tempest) and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, no longer in Poland itself, though a widespread underground movement was active there. In contrast, in the Soviet Union, not only did one have to contend with a brutal occupying regime, but the bloodiest war in modern history was fought for over three years on its territory, and was ultimately decisive in the defeat of the Hitler regime. With his completely exaggerated argument that the war was already lost for Germany shortly after it began, Snyder inappropriately trivializes these events. To be sure, many historians argue today that Nazi Germany stood little chance of winning the war after the gamble of 1941 had failed to pay off. This is a perspective of historical retrospection, however, one that possibly underestimates the significance of the turning point at Stalingrad in 1942/43. Most importantly, the National Socialist regime continued to prosecute the war even after every possible chance of victory had vanished. Its aggressive militarist and genocidal violence ended only with its complete military destruction, which required years of fighting and claimed millions of lives. The fact is and remains that the Soviet Union and its Red Army bore the brunt of the burden. Snyder does not do justice to this momentous struggle, and thus he also fails to do justice to the ambivalence of a liberation that brought no freedom. According to his account of the partisan war, the difference between aggressors and defenders is muddled to such an extent that it is no longer recognizable. That he generally reserves little sympathy for Soviet citizens can hardly be missed.⁷¹

Timothy Snyder has struck a nerve with *Bloodlands*. The lifting of the Iron Curtain has opened the view onto all of Europe's history, and after two decades, there is a growing need to understand the events in the middle of the twentieth century that were significantly (but in no way “to the same degree”) shaped by two totalitarian dictators. Without a doubt, an advantage of Snyder's book is that he calls attention to the fact that the epicenter of the war lay further east than is often recognized. However, in the search for historical orientation in this epoch

71 Snyder, *Bloodlands*, p. 139, does not shy away from using primitive, deprecating clichés that one would not expect to find in a scholarly book: “The Soviet citizens who ruled eastern Poland were falling off bicycles, eating toothpaste, using toilets as sinks, wearing multiple watches, or bras as earmuffs, or lingerie as evening gowns.”

full of contradictions, the book is helpful only to a limited degree. It is a bold attempt to comprehend from a birds-eye view the political tragedies of the 1930s and 1940s in a region in which their impact was great. The results show that the time is probably not yet right for this sort of historiographical high-flying, and that the force of gravity of nation-centered historical narratives is still too strong.

Frank Bajohr

The Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History

The First Two Years in Review

Origins and Goals

In 2010, a paper titled “Holocaust History in Germany – A History without a Future?” circulated inside the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington (USHMM).¹ It deplored a “swift erosion of what had never been a sufficiently well-anchored academic infrastructure,” citing the lack of an institution in Germany comparable to the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies in Washington or the International Institute for Holocaust Research in Jerusalem. Moreover, the paper noted that there was not a single chair for a professor of Holocaust history in Germany, which was certainly not the case in the USA, Great Britain, or Israel. The major problem in Germany, it concluded, was the lack of institutional support to ensure the permanent anchoring of Holocaust research in academia. Even more so today than in the last twenty years, it continued, scholars who study the Holocaust in the Federal Republic do so in thematic isolation, without permanent ties to the universities, and with rather dismal career perspectives.²

It also charged, correctly, that Holocaust research institutes in the USA, Israel, and many other European countries did not have an institutional partner within Germany and that a fellowship program equivalent to those in the USA and Israel was likewise non-existent. With encouragement from Wendy Lower (Claremont McKenna College, USA), the Director of the Institute for Contemporary History (Institut für Zeitgeschichte, IfZ), Andreas Wirsching, set about establishing a Center for Holocaust Studies (Zentrum für Holocaust-Studien) inside the IfZ in 2013, in cooperation with the chairs of Modern and Contemporary History and Jewish History and Culture at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich (LMU),

¹ A more comprehensive version of the paper was published as Jürgen Matthäus, Holocaust-Forschung in Deutschland. Eine Geschichte ohne Zukunft?, in: Michael Brenner/Maximilian Strnad (eds.), *Der Holocaust in der deutschsprachigen Geschichtswissenschaft. Bilanz und Perspektiven*, Göttingen 2012, pp. 27–41.

² Unpublished manuscript in the possession of the author.

Margit Szöllösi-Janze and Michael Brenner. During its preliminary phase, scheduled to last until the end of 2016, the step-by-step task of the Center for Holocaust Studies is to lay the foundation for a larger-scale institute with a focus on three key missions.

First of all, the Center will strive to develop an internationally attractive research infrastructure with fellowships for visiting scholars in order to provide a space for research and communication among doctoral students, post-docs and experts, while also fostering a strong scholarly exchange between the German and international Holocaust research contexts.

Secondly, the Center aims to promote research on the Holocaust in Germany in close cooperation with international research institutions. Although the history of this unprecedented crime of the century will undoubtedly occupy a special place within the history of Germany for the foreseeable future, research in Germany in recent years has overcome classic national orientations and developed perspectives and working contacts that cut across traditional borders in a remarkable way. Over the long run, a PhD fellowship program with an international scope will not only secure an institutional basis for Holocaust research in Germany, but will also help better integrate German research into the global field. Moreover, the cooperation between the Center, the Institute for Contemporary History, and the LMU in Munich will ensure for close links between research and teaching, especially through joint PhD and post-doc programs.

Finally, the Center for Holocaust Studies, together with the LMU Munich, intends to foster university-level teaching about the history of the Holocaust and generally encourage instructors to offer relevant courses at German universities. Through publications that summarize the increasingly complex field of scholarship for instructors, students, and the interested public, as well as through events specifically designed for university instructors, the Center will bolster the systematic exchange of experiences among instructors who often have little contact with other university teachers in the field.

The primary financial support for the preliminary phase of the Center was provided by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, but the funding is ultimately supposed to come from a combination of federal and state sources. At the outset of the preliminary phase in summer 2013, the Center was staffed by two full-time academic positions (Frank Bajohr, Director, and Andrea Löw, Deputy Director) as well as by an additional position financed within the framework of the European EHRI-Project³ (Giles Bennett), in addition to two academic assistants and student assistants. It quickly established itself as an

³ European Holocaust Research Infrastructure; see www.ehri-project.eu.

important research institution in the field of Holocaust Studies. As two years have since passed, it is now time to take stock of what has been accomplished so far and to consider possibilities for the future. The following account can only cursorily summarize the Center's most important functions, which means that the numerous public relations and media activities (lectures, interviews, participation in memorial events, expert testimony in court),⁴ for example, will go without mention because they are beyond the scope of this contribution.

International Conferences

In its first year, the Center sponsored three international conferences, thereby establishing itself as a venue for scholarly exchange on the Holocaust. A workshop organized in conjunction with the Akademie für Politische Bildung (Tutzing), held in April 2014, brought together leading Holocaust scholars from around the world for a critical assessment of the various research approaches to the history of the Holocaust as well as a for a discussion of the historical contextualization of the Holocaust and desiderata that need to be addressed in future research.⁵ All the major findings of the workshop were published for a wider audience in a volume of the "Black Series" of the S. Fischer publishing house. This book, which hit the shelves in 2015, is particularly useful as a guide for developing university courses on the history of the Holocaust.⁶

The next conference underscored one of the major interests and focal points of the Center, namely a social history of the Holocaust that seeks to overcome static interpretations along the lines of the classic "perpetrator-victim-by-stander" categorization. From 23–25 October 2014, the Center held a major international conference in Munich ("The Holocaust and European Societies: Social Processes and Social Dynamics"), which was attended by scholars from fourteen countries who study social processes and social dynamics involved in the Holocaust or for whom the Holocaust was a catalyst within European societies.⁷ The

⁴ Frank Bajohr, for example, served as an expert witness in the trial against the SS sergeant Oskar Gröning at the district court in Lüneburg in 2015.

⁵ For the conference program and report, see <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=5412&view=pdf>.

⁶ See Frank Bajohr/Andrea Löw (eds.), *Der Holocaust. Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung*, Frankfurt a.M. 2015.

⁷ For the program and conference report, see <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=5789&view=pdf>.

conference built on insights emerging out of more recent scholarly approaches that emphasize that the Holocaust was not only an ideologically-driven and politically-executed event, but also a social process in which countless people from European societies were involved as actors, some of whom clearly profited from their involvement.⁸

Another conference on this topic followed in September 2015 at the Duitsland Instituut of the University of Amsterdam, jointly sponsored by the Center. The participants attending the conference “Probing the Limits of Categorization: The ‘Bystander’ in Holocaust History”⁹ explored the genesis, the analytical potential, and above all, the problems of using the category “Bystander” within a European social history of the Holocaust, as it is a term that implies a rather passive distance to the murderous events. However, this term tends to blend out the manifold gray zones of social behavior in which participation, acceptance, self-distancing, and partial resistance were combined in very complex ways.

Diary entries, letters, and other subjective testimonials provide particularly poignant insights into this behavior within the framework of everyday social life. These sources were the focal point of the Dachau Symposium 2014, led by Frank Bajohr together with Sybille Steinbacher, who has been the project leader of the *Dachauer Symposien* since 2013. The conference volume was published in 2015.¹⁰ In that same year, the Center for Holocaust Studies and the Arbeitsstelle Holocaustliteratur at the University of Gießen published one of the most impressive testimonies produced in a ghetto under German occupation, the Yiddish diary entries of Jósef Zelkowitz from the ghetto of Litzmannstadt, which he wrote in September 1942 on the occasion of a mass deportation that lasted several days.¹¹

Two conferences in 2015 organized by the Center for Holocaust Studies and the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington attest to the Center’s international network and the intensive German-American cooperation in this field of research. The first, a “teaching summit” held in July 2015, provided a forum for instructors at German universities who offer courses on the Holocaust to share their experiences with each other. An

8 A collected volume of the conference papers will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2016.

9 For the conference program, see: <http://duitslandinstituut.nl/the-abystandera-in-holocaust-history>.

10 See Frank Bajohr/Sybille Steinbacher (eds.), “... Zeugnis ablegen bis zum letzten.” Tagebücher und persönliche Zeugnisse aus der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus und des Holocaust, Göttingen 2015.

11 See Jósef Zelkowitz, In diesen albraumhaften Tagen. Tagebuchaufzeichnungen aus dem Getto Lodz/Litzmannstadt, September 1942, ed. by Angela Genger, Andrea Löw and Sascha Feuchert, Göttingen 2015.

extensive analysis of the teaching practices at German universities revealed that relevant courses are offered in different disciplines around the country, but sometimes only by a single instructor per university. Furthermore, given that the topic of the Holocaust is not formally anchored in existing university programs such as Masters' degrees, the courses that are offered depend on the personal initiative of the individual instructor. Naturally, these factors cannot be changed from the outside, but there is nonetheless a need to improve the networks among instructors and to arrange for a regular exchange among them, which is one of the goals that the Center will continue to pursue as it expands after 2017.

To this end, the Center and the USHMM sponsored a conference in October 2015 dedicated to discussing research at German memorial sites and documentation centers on the history of the Nazi period. Generally-speaking, research is not the major focus of the mostly pedagogical and didactic-oriented work of these memorials. Moreover, the research that is done tends to be more local in its outlook, which limits its reception within national and international contexts. This needs to change in the medium term because much of this research has potential uses that extend well beyond the boundaries of the respective memorial site.

Eastern Europe is particularly significant for Holocaust research, although both research and teaching are only weakly anchored at the institutional level. In order to foster academic contacts in Eastern Europe, the IfZ and the Center took part in an international conference in November 2013 that was organized by Prof. Il'ja Al'tman (Russian Research and Educational Holocaust Center, Moscow) in Kaliningrad to commemorate the pogroms in November 1938 under the title, "Lessons of the Holocaust and Contemporary Russia: Marking 75 years after the Kristallnacht." The cooperative efforts continued in June 2015 as several presenters from the IfZ and the Center (including Jürgen Zarusky, Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw) took part in the conference "Lessons of the Holocaust and Contemporary Russia" in Moscow.

Fellowship Program

Research on the Holocaust has become so strongly embedded in an international context over the last two decades that traditional national perspectives have definitely lost significance, although they have by no means completely disappeared. Additionally, once dominant national collective memories have become less powerful due to generational shifts. The internationalization of research dialogues has contributed significantly to this development, which has been fostered by international conferences as well as by fellowships for visiting scholars that were

initially offered primarily in Washington and Jerusalem. Both of these factors have promoted a scholarly exchange among researchers from different countries. A comparable set-up has been lacking in Germany, which is why such fellowships for foreign visiting scholars constitute one of the key infrastructure functions of the Center for Holocaust Studies. The Institute for Contemporary History and its Center for Holocaust Studies hosted a total of fourteen research fellows in Munich from 2013 to 2015.¹² Among them were a number of visiting scholars from Eastern Europe who face rather difficult working environments, both politically and academically, in their respective home countries. Accordingly, the Center has taken on an important geographic function as a bridge to Eastern Europe.

Furthermore, the Center, together with the Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, has established a joint fellowship program designed to foster the German-American exchange of scholars of Holocaust history in particular.¹³ Finally, the Center has functioned as the host institution for foreign fellows on research stays in Munich made possible within the framework of the European EHRI program.¹⁴ Munich has offered all the

12 The following fellows were hosted at the IfZ – Center for Holocaust Studies: Dana Smith, Queen Mary University of London (Jewish Cultural Association in Bavaria 1934–1938); Froukje Demant, Amsterdam University (The Daily Relations of Jews and Non-Jews in the German-Dutch Border Region 1925–1955); Yuri Radchenko, National University of Kharkiv, Ukraine (Ukrainian Hilfspolizei, Self-Government, and the Holocaust in Ukraine); Elisabeth Pönisch, Universität Freiburg (“Judenhäuser” in the German Reich starting in 1939); Diana Dumitru, Ion Creangă State Pedagogical University of Moldova (Traumatic Encounters: Jews, Gentiles and the Soviet State in the Aftermath of the Holocaust); Aleksander Kruglov, Ukrainian Institute for Holocaust Studies, Dnepropetrovsk (The Holocaust in the USSR Regions Occupied by Germans: Problem of Regional Features and Periodization); Felix Mattheis, Universität Hamburg (“Hamburg in the East”: The Occupation of Poland and the Holocaust from the Perspective of the Hanse City, 1939–1945); Adam Gellert, Central European University, Budapest (Partners in Crime: The German-Hungarian Solution of the Jewish Question in Hungary in 1944).

13 The following scholars were hosted under the auspices of the joint fellowship in 2013 and 2014: Tom Frydel, University of Toronto (Polish “Blue Police” in the Holocaust) and Sari Siegel, University of Southern California (Medicine Behind Barbed Wire: Jewish Prisoner-Physicians in Nazi Labor, Concentration and Extermination Camps); the fellowship has been awarded in 2016 to Natalia Aleksion, Touro College, New York (Daily Survival: Social History of Jews Hiding in Eastern Galicia).

14 EHRI-Fellows hosted so far: Devra Katz, University of Haifa (Emotions in Stutthof: An Analysis of the Social Function of Emotions in a Prisoner Society), Aleksandra Loewenau, Oxford Brookes University (GB) (Rebuilding Lives of Jewish Survivors of Medical Experiments at Auschwitz: A Comparative Study), Katarzyna Person, Jewish Historical Institute Warsaw (Polish-Jewish Relations in Germany in the Immediate Postwar Period) and Matt Lawson, Edge Hill University (GB) (Film Music of German Holocaust Cinema).

follows an ideal place for conversation and dialog. These scholars presented their projects within the framework of the academic colloquium of the IfZ. Some of the presentations took place in cooperation with the senior seminar of the chair in Jewish History at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich. It has not only been the expertise in the field at the Center but also the great number of scholars researching topics in the history of National Socialism at the IfZ that has made for such a stimulating intellectual climate.

European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI)

A major project funded by the European Union started up in 2011 in order to expand and strengthen institutional support for a permanent network of European research and archival resources relevant to the history of the Holocaust. The first project phase has been completed with the launch of an online portal that is the best information resource on archival holdings related to the Holocaust in the world.¹⁵ The European Commission has approved funding in the amount of 8 million Euros for 2015–2019 to support the continuation of this project, which is supported by 23 research institutes from 15 European states, Israel, and the USA. Within the framework of the EHRI-Project, which is presently divided into 14 “work packages,” the Institute for Contemporary History/Center for Holocaust Studies have been involved in the Project Management Board and have headed up two work packages: WP 4 (Coordinating Transnational Access to Research Infrastructures, leader until August 2013: Johannes Hürter, followed by Frank Bajohr) and WP 5 (Training, leader: Andrea Löw). The EHRI activities of the IfZ and the Center for Holocaust Studies are coordinated by Giles Bennett. The IfZ and the Center were responsible for the organization of the EHRI Fellowships (at five locations), for the online courses on the history of the Holocaust, and for the Summer Schools sponsored by the EHRI. Within the framework of the online courses, the Center developed courses on “Ghettos Under Nazi Rule” (conception: Andrea Löw and Giles Bennett) and on “The Germans and the Holocaust” (conception: Sonja Schilcher), in addition to its “Country Reports,”¹⁶ a more than two-hundred page comprehensive information resource on European institutions, archives, and archival materials related to the Holocaust in 47 different countries, mostly in Europe (co-editors: Pascal Trees and Giles Bennett). Additionally, the most

¹⁵ For more details, please see the official homepage: www.ehri-project.eu.

¹⁶ See <http://www.ehri-project.eu/national-reports>.

important archival guide on relevant collections in the significant Polish archival landscape was updated and translated into English. It has been published online to make it available to a wider academic public.¹⁷ At the moment, the EHRI portal contains information about over 1,800 archives in 57 countries. Over 150,000 Holocaust-related archival collections have been located in over 460 institutions.

International Summer Schools for young scholars have been held within the framework of the EHRI program in Paris, Amsterdam, Jerusalem, and Munich. Associates of the Center have taken part in all of these events as lecturers. The “Summer School on Holocaust Research” in Munich (22 July – 9 August 2013) took place at the Akademie für Politische Bildung (Tutzing) and was organized by Andrea Löw and Giles Bennett. This summer program for twelve young European scholars was held in conjunction with the MISU Summer School for twelve young researchers from the USA. Planned by the Center and Wendy Lower (Claremont McKenna College, USA) and offered in cooperation with the LMU Munich, this Munich Summer School proved to be quite a success. Methods and trends within international Holocaust research were taught in an intensive program in which prominent scholars such as Christopher Browning and Alan Steinweis took part.

Research

Despite its clear focus on the development of a research infrastructure, the Center for Holocaust Studies has also established its own research profile. The most important project thus far has been a published edition of the political diaries of Alfred Rosenberg, the chief National Socialist ideologue and Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories, from 1934–1944. Staff of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum first discovered the diaries in 2013 in the scattered collections of Robert Kempner, the American prosecutor in the Nuremberg Trials. They were published jointly by the museum’s Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies (Jürgen Matthäus) and the Center for Holocaust Studies (Frank Bajohr). Rosenberg’s diaries, in conjunction with documents from his estate that were hitherto not publicly available, are quite significant for the history of the Holocaust, as they raise questions about the major political decision-making processes, and in particular about Rosenberg’s responsibility for the Holocaust, while simultaneously

¹⁷ Alina Skibińska, Guide to the Sources on the Holocaust in Occupied Poland; http://training.ehri-project.eu/sites/default/files/portal_assets/skibinska_guide.pdf; co-editors: Giles Bennett and Pascal Trees.

providing answers on the basis of newly discovered materials. Jürgen Matthäus and Frank Bajohr contributed a more than 120-page introduction, and the diaries themselves were annotated with numerous explanatory footnotes compiled with the help of the research assistants at the Institute. The German edition was issued in 2015 by the S. Fischer publishing house.¹⁸ French, English and Spanish editions were published in the same year, and the diaries even climbed to 7th place on the bestseller lists in Spain.¹⁹ Polish and Portuguese editions are currently in preparation.

Additionally, the Center for Holocaust Studies has organized a research project on the “Diplomatic Reports on the Persecution of Jews and the Holocaust in Europe.” It builds on a project undertaken in 2010/2011 that conducted a comparative analysis of foreign diplomatic reports on the Third Reich stemming from ten different countries.²⁰ The new project will include countries in Eastern and Northern Europe (Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Sweden, Finland, etc.) that were not included in the initial project, and it will focus on reports on the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust. Like its predecessor, this project can only succeed with the cooperation of a network of historians from the countries in question, who are well-informed about the source materials available in their home countries. Consequently, the EHRI project, which has culled together collections of sources relevant to the history of the Holocaust in Europe, provides an ideal framework for such an international project. Funding has been approved for this undertaking from 2015–2019 as part of Work Package 12.

Finally, the Center has promoted a number of individual research projects that cannot be listed in full detail here. One of the most important projects is the dissertation of Anna-Raphaëla Schmitz with the working title, “Rudolf Höß – Scope of Action, Network of Relations, and Private Life of a Concentration Camp Commandant.” Schmitz intends to write a biography of the commandant of Auschwitz from a “praxeological” perspective that does not seek to explain his actions primarily on the basis of supposed biographical impressions and continuities, but rather through a detailed analysis of the patterns of praxis and their determinants

18 See Jürgen Matthäus/Frank Bajohr (eds.), Alfred Rosenberg. Die Tagebücher 1934–1944, Frankfurt a.M. 2015.

19 See Alfred Rosenberg, *Journal 1934–1944*, ed. by Jürgen Matthäus and Frank Bajohr, Paris 2015; Jürgen Matthäus/Frank Bajohr (eds.), *The Political Diary of Alfred Rosenberg and the Onset of the Holocaust*, Lanham/MD 2015; Alfred Rosenberg, *Diarios 1934–1944*, Edición a cargo de Jürgen Matthäus y Frank Bajohr, Barcelona 2015.

20 See Frank Bajohr/Christoph Strupp (eds.), *Fremde Blicke auf das “Dritte Reich.” Berichte ausländischer Diplomaten über Herrschaft und Gesellschaft in Deutschland 1933–1945*, Göttingen 2011.

in the Auschwitz concentration camp, including the personal networks within which Rudolf Höß operated. The private estate of the commandant of Auschwitz will be analyzed comprehensively as part of this project.

Plans and Prospects

1) Research and teaching related to the Holocaust needs active centers of scholarly expertise in Germany with a strong national and international reputation. Alongside Berlin, with its universities, museums, documentation centers and research institutes, and Frankfurt am Main, home to the Fritz-Bauer-Institute and a planned chair in Holocaust Studies at the Goethe-Universität, Munich is also predestined to serve as such a hub, thanks to its countless memorial sites, academic libraries, documentation centers and archives, but above all because of the virtually unparalleled concentration of expertise at the Institute for Zeitgeschichte and the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität. Munich can and should become a central venue for research and teaching on the Holocaust that combines the expert knowledge available at the IfZ and the Center for Holocaust Studies with the excellence in scholarship at the LMU in Modern History, Eastern European History, and Jewish Studies. Moreover, with its numerous academies and educational organizations, Munich offers a central location for promoting workshops and exchanges among instructors who teach the Holocaust at German universities as well as the staff and multipliers who work at the memorial sites and documentation centers.

2) Within the framework of the planned expansion of the Center, the visiting scholars program at the Center for Holocaust Studies will be noticeably expanded beyond the current scope of support for PhD students and post-docs to include senior fellows as well. In doing so, the Center will effectively lay the foundation to turn the fellowship program into a full-fledged research college offering thematic workshops and other programs. It will also strive to foster institutionalized scholarly exchange with partners in Israel – as has already been started with the USA – for example with the Strochlitz Institute for Holocaust Research that offers an international MA and PhD program in Holocaust Studies at the University of Haifa.

3) In recent years, scholars have increasingly turned their attention towards Eastern Europe, and rightly so. However, it must still be said that the existing source collections have by no means been exhaustively assessed, especially the documents related to the numerous special commissions and tribunals that followed the Red Army westward over the course of the war and sought to deal with

collaborators and those who participated in the Holocaust. There is no shortage of gripping theses about “spaces of violence” in Eastern Europe in which the space itself at times becomes an actor and violence becomes self-explanatory, defined as a structural self-executing process once it has been unleashed,²¹ or claims of the supposed interdependence of the National Socialist and Stalinist regimes of terror in the so-called Bloodlands.²² Likewise, there are plenty of monocausal arguments that cite the lack of stable states in the area of Eastern Europe as the key to explaining the nature of the Holocaust.²³ What is lacking, however, are detailed empirical studies that depart from such overarching theses and look more closely at the Holocaust in terms of the social processes and interactions occurring under the German occupation of the eastern territories, and in the context of the central ideological principles of National Socialism. This type of research will be one of the main focuses of the Zentrum in the years to come.

4) In the future, Munich will surely advance to become a major conference location and center of scholarly activity on the Holocaust. In February 2016, the Center for Holocaust Studies hosted an international conference dealing with one of the key topics associated with the path towards the Holocaust, namely the rise of populist right-wing, authoritarian, and fascist regimes in Europe in the 1930s alongside antisemitic politics and practices on the eve of the Holocaust. The title of the conference aptly summarizes its focus: “Europe 1935–1941: Right-Wing Politics and the Rise of Antisemitism.”²⁴ Going beyond such individual conferences, there is a need in Europe for an institutionalized conference and dialog process akin to that of the “Lessons & Legacies” conferences held every other year in the USA, which are attended by the majority of scholars of the Holocaust, albeit mostly only those from North America. Due to the high prices of flights and conference fees, these conferences remain beyond the means of younger scholars, and especially those from Eastern Europe. Consequently, it makes sense to establish a similar European forum, “Lessons and Legacies – Munich,” to be held in the year between the American conferences.

5) Especially over the last 25 years, German historians have been highly involved in the intensification of research on the mass extermination of the European Jews across the globe and have conducted foundational research in this area that

²¹ See Jörg Baberowski/Gabriele Metzler (eds.), *Gewalträume. Soziale Ordnungen im Ausnahmezustand*, Frankfurt a.M. 2012.

²² See Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin*, New York 2010.

²³ See *ibid.*, *Black Earth. The Holocaust as History and Warning*, New York 2015.

²⁴ The conference held from 18 February – 20 February 2016 was organized by the Center in cooperation with Dieter Pohl (Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt) and Grzegorz Krzywiak (Instytut Historii PAN, Warsaw).

has not attracted the same amount of attention in all countries. In particular, the findings of German scholarship have often gone unnoticed in non-Anglophone countries such as Germany's neighbor, France. For this reason, two special volumes of the *Révue d'histoire de la Shoah* under the working title, "German Historical Writing and the Shoah: Development, Topics, Findings since 1990," are planned for publication in 2017 as part of a cooperative effort between the Memorial de la Shoah and the Center for Holocaust Studies. Through its international networks, the Center has the important task of increasing the visibility of German scholarship outside the boundaries of Germany itself. At the same time, there is a growing need within Germany for online information portals that pull together the often confusing mass of international conferences and fellowships and to provide forums for the interactive exchange of information among scholars. Such online resources can be of great assistance to researchers who live in German cities and regions lacking sufficient academic resources for Holocaust research. After all, the main task of the Center is to promote the research and teaching of the Holocaust throughout all of Germany.

Susanne Heim

Project: The Persecution and Murder of the European Jews by National Socialist Germany, 1933–1945

In 2008 the first volume of the source edition *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der europäischen Juden durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland 1933–1945* (*The Persecution and Murder of the European Jews by National Socialist Germany, 1933–1945*) was published. Since then, eight additional volumes have appeared, and seven further volumes are in preparation. The aim of the edition is to present a thematically comprehensive and academically annotated selection of sources on the Holocaust. The edition is structured chronologically and geographically. Each of the sixteen volumes contains between 300 and 330 documents, as well as an extensive introduction that describes the relevant events on the basis of the current state of research.

In the following list of all the volumes, those already published are set in boldface, and the individual compilers are named in parentheses:

- 1. German Reich, 1933–1937** (Wolf Gruner)
- 2. German Reich, 1938 – August 1939** (Susanne Heim)
- 3. German Reich and Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, September 1939 – September 1941** (Andrea Löw)
- 4. Poland, September 1939 – July 1941** (Klaus-Peter Friedrich)
- 5. Western and Northern Europe, 1940 – June 1942** (Katja Happe, Michael Mayer, Maja Peers)
6. German Reich and Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, October 1941 – spring 1943 (Susanne Heim)
- 7. Soviet Union and Annexed Territories I** (Bert Hoppe, Hiltrun Glass)
- 8. Soviet Union and Annexed Territories II** (Bert Hoppe)
- 9. Poland: General Government, August 1941–1945** (Klaus-Peter Friedrich)
10. Poland: Incorporated Territories, August 1941–1945 (Ingo Loose)
11. German Reich and Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, spring 1943–1945 (Lisa Hauff)
- 12. Western and Northern Europe, July 1942–1945** (Katja Happe, Barbara Lambauer, Clemens Maier-Wolthausen)
13. Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria, 1939–1945 (Barbara Hutzelmann, Mariana Hausleitner, Souzana Hazan)
14. South-Eastern and Southern Europe, 1941–1945: Yugoslavia, Greece, Albania and Italy (Sanela Schmid, Maria Vassilikou, Erwin Lewin, Sara Berger)

15. Hungary (Regina Fritz)

16. Auschwitz, 1942–1945, and the Death Marches (Andrea Rudorff)

The series is scheduled for completion in 2019, at which point it is expected that around 5,000 annotated documents will have been published, a substantial proportion of which will be gathered in the project's digital database.

The project is funded by the German Research Foundation and is being published under the auspices of the Institute for Contemporary History, the Department of Modern and Contemporary History at the Albert-Ludwig-University Freiburg, and the German Federal Archives. The editorial board comprises the directors of the three responsible institutions – Andreas Wirsching, Ulrich Herbert, and Michael Hollmann – in addition to Horst Möller, Dieter Pohl, Susanne Heim, and Sybille Steinbacher. The volumes are being prepared for publication in the Berlin editorial offices and are being published by De Gruyter – Oldenbourg.

Initial discussions regarding such a collection date back to the turn of the century. The initiators, who subsequently became members of the editorial board, believed for various reasons that the time was right for such an undertaking. After the expansion of Holocaust research in the 1990s and the improvement in archival conditions after the end of the Cold War, our knowledge of the history of the persecution of the Jews had become considerably more nuanced. The traditional scholarly focus on Hitler and his narrow leadership circle had been replaced by a critical view of the co-responsibility of social elites, state institutions, the non-Jewish populace, and non-German perpetrators. Thus, the wide scope of action for those involved in the Holocaust has become clearer, and it has been established that ideas and initiatives “from below” often solidified and radicalized the policies of the Nazi leadership.

As a result, a number of academic controversies of the previous period were rendered obsolete. Against the backdrop of the internationalization of Holocaust research, a degree of consensus has been established regarding the key events and factors that led to the murder of the European Jews. Finally, the inevitable passing of the witness generation has made it imperative to offer a collection of sources documenting the persecution of the Jews to a wider public in a scholarly format. The editors agreed on the following principles for the composition of the edition:

- The edition will be structured geographically and will aim to document the persecution of the Jews in all countries and regions in which the Holocaust took place. The focus of the documentation will be on events in the German Reich, where the mass crimes were planned, and on the persecution of the Jews in German-occupied Eastern Europe, where most of the European Jews were murdered.

- All significant documents bearing on decisions to murder the Jews made by perpetrators in high positions will be printed. The volumes should contain roughly an equal number of perpetrator documents and of documents written from the perspective of those who were persecuted. Around twenty per cent of the documents will reflect the vantage point of those who were not directly involved, including foreign diplomats and journalists, representatives of the churches and foreign aid organisations, as well as local non-Jews who reported on the persecution of their Jewish neighbours.
- The collection will contain only documents dating from before 8 May 1945. Later accounts and memoirs will be used only in the compilation of the annotations and the introductions.
- No photographs will be published. In exceptional cases, documents with a predominantly visual significance, like sketches or posters, will be printed as facsimiles.
- All documents will be academically annotated and the protagonists will be furnished with a brief biographical note. Institutions, themes, and specific terms will be explained in the footnotes with the aim of making the edition accessible to all interested parties, even if they do not possess special subject knowledge.
- Foreign-language documents will be translated into German. Although the translation of historical documents is very time-consuming and not without controversy from a scholarly point of view, the editors decided in favour of a translation because otherwise, in view of the substantial number of languages – the documents in volume 7 (Soviet Union I) were written in twelve languages – hardly anyone would be able to read all the documents in a given volume.
- The introductions in each volume should contextualise the documents on the basis of the current state of research.

Since 2014 an English translation of the entire edition has been in preparation. The first three volumes are expected to appear simultaneously in 2017. For the English version, which will be published in association with Yad Vashem, all documents will be translated from their original languages. Unlike the German edition, in which the indexes contain only people, places, and institutions, the English version will contain a detailed subject index so that the reader may more easily locate documents.

A partial edition in Hebrew, likewise in association with Yad Vashem, is also in preparation. It will contain a selection of documents on the persecution of the Jews in Germany.

The editorial office for audio drama and media art at Bavarian State Radio is producing a series of audio documentaries on the basis of documents from the project, which, after broadcast, are being made available both as an audio book and on line. In broadcasts lasting approximately one-and-a-half hours, documents are read from each volume, generally by actors, but also by survivors. Bavarian Radio has also conducted interviews with these survivors, in which they report on their experiences during the Holocaust. Historians working on the edition, as well as interested colleagues, are interviewed as well. The audio documentary is accessible at www.die-quellen-sprechen.de.

More information on the edition as well as reviews of the published volumes are available at www.edition-judenverfolgung.de.

About the Contributions to this Yearbook

The articles by Peter Hayes and Valerie Hébert, as well as the Project Report by Susanne Heim, were written specifically for this volume and have not appeared previously.

Frank Bajohr's article was published originally as *Zwei Jahre Zentrum für Holocaust-Studien am Institut für Zeitgeschichte*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 64 (2016), pp. 139–49.

Ulrich Herbert's article was published previously as *Holocaust-Forschung in Deutschland. Geschichte und Perspektiven einer schwierigen Disziplin*, in: Frank Bajohr/Andrea Löw (eds.), *Der Holocaust. Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung*, Frankfurt a.M. 2015, pp. 31–79.

Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe's article was published previously as *Erinnerungslücke Holocaust. Die ukrainische Diaspora und der Genozid an den Juden*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 62 (2014), pp. 397–430.

Hans Rothfels' article was published previously as *Augenzeugenbericht zu den Massenvergasungen*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 1 (1953), pp. 177–94.

Jürgen Zarusky's article was published previously as Timothy Snyders „Bloodlands.“ *Kritische Anmerkungen zur Konstruktion einer Geschichtslandschaft*, in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 60 (2012), pp. 1–31.

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