Introduction to Volume II

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This volume in the *Cambridge History of the Holocaust* focuses on perpetration and complicity in the Holocaust. Every aspect of this undertaking is contentious, starting with the illusion often associated with comprehensive histories such as this one that it is "definitive," as if its topic has been exhaustively researched to leave no question unanswered. Nothing could be further from the truth. The very term "Holocaust," which came into widespread usage only from the late 1970s, itself constructs an all-embracing concept encompassing a great variety of disparate events across Nazi-dominated Europe: face-to-face shootings along the Eastern Front; gassing in the notorious killing centers in occupied Poland; deaths from disease, starvation, and brutality in the course of expropriation, ghettoization, economic exploitation, and the final death marches; and it can also, on some views, be extended back to encompass persecution before the atrocities accompanying the outbreak of war in 1939 or the switch to policies of extermination in 1941. The word Holocaust has itself been challenged, with discomfort about the potentially sacrificial connotations of being "totally burnt"; yet alternatives, including the Nazis' own euphemism of a "Final Solution" to their self-created "Jewish question," or the Yiddish word for destruction (*Khurbn*) and the Hebrew word for catastrophe (*Shoah*), have not been universally accepted either; and all of these may appear to exclude other persecuted groups who were not Jewish. The distinctiveness of the mass murder of Jews as compared with other groups and other genocides is hotly debated, as are the possible connections with colonialism. Moreover, not only the concept but also the focus in this volume specifically on perpetration and complicity may be seen as contentious. Particularly since the publication of Saul Friedländer's two-volume history of *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, there has been widespread recognition of calls for an "integrated history," encompassing the voices and agency of victims as well as the policies and practices of perpetrators.[1]

[1] S. Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, Vol. I: *The Years of Persecution 1933–39* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997); S. Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, Vol. II: *The Years of Extermination 1939–45* (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2007).

It is therefore all the more essential here to outline the underlying rationale and wider issues around the topic. We begin with a brief overview of the background and the ways in which public perceptions and scholarly research have developed and changed since the defeat of the Nazi regime;[2] we then focus more specifically on relevant issues addressed in this volume. Overall, this volume's goal is to provide an overview of research into Holocaust perpetration and complicity, highlighting emergent and prevalent emphases as well as major findings and ongoing challenges, for the purpose of stimulating scholarly and public engagement with the agonizingly relevant question of the conditions under which people participate in collective violence and mass murder.

APPROACHING THE HOLOCAUST: QUESTIONS OF PERPETRATION, GUILT, AND COMPLICITY AFTER 1945

In the early months and years after liberation, survivors could often give only incomplete, even incoherent, accounts of the horrific events they had experienced. Those voices captured in, for example, the postwar testimonies recorded by David Boder, or in witness statements collected by the Jewish Historical Commission, the Wiener Library, the YIVO, and other organizations, were often fragmentary and partial. Their perceptions of perpetrators were largely formed by face-to-face encounters with individual beneficiaries of exploitation or uniformed officials, guards, and killers; the victim's view was essentially a localized "worm's-eye view." It took a while for a more comprehensive picture to be built up, both of those propelling the system behind the scenes and of the complexity and interconnectedness of developments across Europe. Yet, even as awareness evolved of the horrific extent and correlation of this violence, and well before the Holocaust had been given that name, people had grappled with the question of culpability for mass murder and the identification of perpetrators. Since the German attack on Poland, news and rumors about Axis violence against civilians, submerged in an avalanche of war news and propaganda, had reached neutral or Allied

[2] For a broader overview of the development of Holocaust historiography, see Chapters 1–9 in Volume I in this series.

countries. Already before the end of the war, there were isolated trials relating to Nazi atrocities; and the postwar International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg and subsequent trials carried out by the Allies more systematically sought to bring representatives of those held to be most responsible to justice, and to bring their crimes to wider public attention. In 1948, the United Nations Genocide Convention adopted the concept of "genocide" to encompass "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such." Different postwar states pursued justice against significant perpetrators, with varying emphases according to national jurisdiction, geopolitical location, and specific interests, as well as differing degrees of inadequacy. Meanwhile, historians from a variety of scholarly and political traditions began to construct accounts of camps, ghettoes, deportations, locations, and episodes of violence, and to trace the evolution of Nazi policies from discrimination, persecution, and exclusion, to outright extermination. Although from the later 1950s the term "holocaust" was used with a lower case "h" and often qualified by an adjective, it was only a couple of decades later that the designation "Holocaust," now with a capital "H," was given a massive boost by the popular reception of Gerald Green's TV miniseries under that title (first aired in the USA in 1978, and with massive impact in Europe from early 1979), and became widely albeit not universally accepted.

While generalizations are always open to qualification, a high-level summary of approaches to perpetration and complicity since the early postwar period might suggest there has been a general (if always contentious) broadening of horizons in several key respects. In particular, an initial focus on significant individuals, selected organizations, and Nazi ideology has been complemented by enhanced attention to structural, cultural, and contextual factors across a wider European stage. Both historiographical approaches and public perceptions of perpetration were always intimately related to the wider historical circumstances of scholarly research and reception. The relationships between scholarship and public perception were complex from the beginning and remain so; to claim that the former determined the latter would be as simplistic as the reverse. Research centered on particular states – notably, of course, Germany – was progressively broadened, and, following the end of the Cold War, western and eastern European approaches became more closely interrelated. Throughout the decades, however, questions around the relative importance of ideological antisemitism and German responsibility ran like threads through different approaches. Even so, the images of perpetrators that were current in the courtrooms, the

media, and public debates did not always correspond to concepts prevalent in discussions among scholars, as a cursory overview will readily reveal.

In the early years after the war, there was overwhelming interest in the high-level initiators, organizers, and executors of genocide – Hitler, Himmler, the SS – and the frontline murderers, those directly involved in shootings at the death pits and gassings in the extermination camps. Such conceptions of perpetration were shaped by pre-1939 memories, wartime reporting, and early postwar trials; and they had enormous practical implications in postwar societies, in different ways focusing attention on the few and effectively exonerating the many, as reflected, for example, in the telling title of Gerald Reitlinger's book on the SS as "the alibi of a nation."[3] This focus could assist social and political stabilization after the upheavals of wartime, and accompany policies of mass rehabilitation and reintegration of professionals and others who had sustained and facilitated the Nazi regime, or had engaged in collaboration elsewhere. In the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), following brief periods of denazification and in a context of widespread amnesties, the vast majority of those who had held significant responsibilities in the Nazi regime rapidly became pillars of the new establishment, taking up roles in the judiciary, the civil service, and professional circles on the basis of their alleged "expertise." In communist East Germany, "imperialism and monopoly capitalism" were blamed for the rise of Nazism, and the allegedly innocent "workers and peasants" were officially exonerated; ironically, this quite different approach to questions of culpability led to a similar practical outcome, with rehabilitation for former Nazis, provided that they were willing to commit their energies in service of the new German Democratic Republic (GDR). On both sides of the Wall, only relatively few Nazi perpetrators were brought to trial (proportionately more in the GDR than in the FRG), further assisting the narrowing of conceptions of guilt and responsibility for Nazi crimes. Across areas of Europe that had formerly been annexed or occupied, or in states that had collaborated with the Nazis, new national myths were developed that facilitated the construction of new postwar identities, often at the expense of historical accuracy concerning culpability.[4]

Clearly, historiographical approaches to perpetration did not run in tandem with national myths, popular perceptions, or legal applications. Yet

[3] G. Reitlinger, *The SS: Alibi of a Nation, 1922–1945* (London, Arms and Armour Press, 1981 [1956]).

[4] For these developments, see particularly Volumes I and IV in this series. See also M. Fulbrook, *Reckonings: Legacies of Nazi Persecution and the Quest for Justice* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018).

a widespread urge to identify culprits at the top, to sensationalize the "evil brutes" who exercised violence in the camps, or to celebrate heroes of resistance, while castigating those who had in some way complied or failed to exercise even limited agency to resist, continued. These emphases arguably often outweighed recognition of sober analyses of the bureaucratic machinery that had made Nazi policies of extermination possible, as outlined in Raul Hilberg's pathbreaking work, the publication of which was immensely delayed.[5] And even if the philosopher Hannah Arendt drew on Hilberg's manuscript to a greater extent than she was prepared to acknowledge for her widely acclaimed reflections on the Eichmann trial (which were less well founded than often assumed), published with a catchy subtitle pointing to *The Banality of Evil*, the contentious notion of complicity seemed to many to be more applicable to the Jewish Councils who had been coerced into compliance than to the many ordinary citizens who had with varying degrees of enthusiasm sustained and enacted Nazi rule.[6] From the later 1960s and 1970s onwards, however, historiographical approaches began to change, in an increasingly international climate of research and scholarly exchanges. In Germany in particular, new generations of historians who were less personally implicated in the crimes of the Nazi era began to probe more deeply into the period, although many remained intellectually subservient to the more compromised generation of their teachers and mentors. Cataclysmic debates erupted when, in the later 1990s, some of the revered masters were revealed to have had feet of clay.[7]

Even as the historical scholarship became more complex and sophisticated, however, there long remained an understandably Germano-centric and indeed Hitler-centric focus in trying to explain perpetration in the Holocaust, which we return to below. Furthermore, while Holocaust survivors of different groups, some led by scholars, had started early on the daunting task of documenting their experiences, including the identification of their victimizers, hegemonic academic discourse as it evolved in the West was dominated by discussions rarely concerned with culpability for *ad*

[5] R. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3rd ed. (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2003 [1961]); R. Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 105–19, 150–7.

[6] H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (London, Penguin Viking Press, 1963); B. Stangneth, *Eichmann before Jerusalem: The Unexamined Life of a Mass Murderer* (New York, Knopf Doubleday, 2014).

[7] See, for example, R. Hohls and K. H. Jarausch (eds.), *Versäumte Fragen: Deutsche Historiker im Schatten des Nationalsozialismus* (Stuttgart, DVA, 2000); N. Berg, *The Holocaust and the West German Historians: Historical Interpretation and Autobiographical Memory* (Madison, WI, University of Wisconsin Press, 2015).

personam crimes. Insofar as the non-Jewish population of the Reich itself was concerned, debates tended to circle around the relative importance of coercion or consent, the effects of terror and ideology, and the question of what did people "know," rather than what did so many actually do, echoing in some ways the self-defensive refrain that "we knew nothing about it" and therefore could not be held responsible. Even with the rise of the history of everyday life from the 1970s, the emphasis was largely on the possibilities of small refusals, with the search for politically laudatory acts of non-compliance, or "resistance" (*Resistenz*, in Martin Broszat's terminology) in the medical sense of "immunity" to metaphorical infection by Nazism. These approaches shifted significantly from the 1980s onwards; yet, despite the continuing stereotypical perception in some quarters that, in essence, all Germans were bad Germans (reinforced by the publication in 1995 of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's widely popular but fundamentally flawed thesis on a supposedly persisting mentality of "eliminationist antisemitism" in Germany), the difficult issue of mass complicity was only partially explored, and in many quarters effectively evaded for decades. Similarly, questions around collaboration on the part of non-Germans could not forever be submerged behind heroic tales of national resistance, and gradually began to be addressed more explicitly, as, for example, in France from the 1970s onwards, while in other areas questions about collaboration and complicity in the Holocaust continued to be evaded.[8] Particularly in eastern Europe under Soviet domination, despite judicial investigations into local war criminals, broader questions of collaboration and complicity could be buried under the myth of the Great Patriotic War and glorious liberation by the Red Army. Even the recognition of the specifically Jewish identity of so many victims of Nazi persecution was problematic; they were often simply listed as "Soviet citizens" on memorials, or the sites of mass graves of murdered Jews were completely ignored, consigned to oblivion, in contrast to the strident memorialization of Soviet workers at former sites of forced labor.

Curiously, over the postwar decades notions of guilt and complicity were approached rather differently among historians from communities that had been persecuted. Among survivor historians who wrote about ghettoes and extermination camps, for example, a considerable weight of culpability was laid at the door of allegedly over-compliant Jewish councils, or members of the ghetto police, or those who were coerced into assisting the perpetrators

[8] On France, see, for example, M. Marrus and R. Paxton, *Vichy France and the Jews* (New York, Basic Books, 1981); H. Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1991).

in what Primo Levi famously termed the "gray zone." Historical accounts were often deeply imbued with concern about betrayal and complicity, which was reflected also in many Israeli court cases relating to Jewish complicity in the crimes of the Nazi era.[9] Moreover, different communities developed contrasting assumptions about the very nature of history as a discipline. While German historians sought to adopt a tone of allegedly scientific "objectivity" – interpreted in very different ways in East and West Germany, it should be noted – tempers and emotions could run very high. The periodic eruption of major public controversies demonstrated not only that political considerations were never very far removed from scholarly interpretations, as illustrated in the notorious West German *Historikerstreit* of 1986–7, but also that implicit underlying assumptions about, for example, the meaning of "normality" could inform striking differences of historical approach, as more interestingly evidenced in the open exchange of letters between Martin Broszat and Saul Friedländer in late 1987.[10]

There have been major shifts of emphasis in historiography since the 1990s. For one thing, with the collapse of communism, scholarly research has become increasingly internationalized. In the 1970s and 1980s it still made some sense to talk about different "national" traditions; but, with the easing of international travel and the growth of exchanges in person as well as over the internet, researchers have engaged in debates across continents, and publishing too has become increasingly international. For another, there have been significant shifts both in substantive focus and in theoretical approaches to perpetration. The continuing diversification of approaches – societal history, transnational history, the "cultural turn," the "linguistic turn," the "spatial turn," among others – as well as shifting areas of interest and emphasis began to challenge and complement primarily institutional and political approaches, or narrowly conceived national histories.

Empirically, the ending of the Cold War led initially – more patchily in some areas than others – to an opening of many previously inaccessible eastern European archives to Western scholars, and an expansion of

[9] M. Bazyler and F. Tuerkheimer, 'The Jewish Kapo Trials in Israel: Is there a place for the law in the Gray Zone?', in M. Bazyler and F. Tuerkheimer, *Forgotten Trials of the Holocaust* (New York, New York University Press, 2014), pp. 195–225; D. Porat, *Bitter Reckoning: Israel Tries Holocaust Survivors as Nazi Collaborators* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2019).

[10] See, for example, R. Augstein, K. D. Bracher, M. Broszat et al.,*" Historikerstreit": Die Dokumentation der Kontroverse um die Einzigartigkeit der nationalsozialistischen Judenvernichtung* (Munich, Piper Verlag, 1987); Broszat–Friedländer exchange of letters in English translation in P. Baldwin (ed.), *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust and the Historians' Debate* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1990), pp. 102–34.

opportunities also to conduct interviews with surviving participants and witnesses to violence. The field of "perpetrator research" expanded accordingly, broadening the focus well beyond the highly visible culprits at the top who had been under the spotlight in the first postwar decades. Members of police battalions, ordinary soldiers, and a broader range of professionals and support staff in the occupied territories, including women, were increasingly subjected to scrutiny. Despite the decisive importance of the Nuremberg trials for the early development of Holocaust historiography, academics had rather ignored the body of evidence as well as the interpretative findings produced by criminal investigators. That changed with Christopher Browning's 1992 study *Ordinary Men*, based on the massive records of West German prosecutors, which highlighted the potential scholarly richness of these sources if interpreted appropriately.[11] The expansion of horizons helped to bring to wider attention the "crimes of the Wehrmacht," with the opening of a controversial exhibition on "The Crimes of the Wehrmacht" in 1995 that traveled widely through Germany and Austria (before minor factual inaccuracies prompted major conceptual revisions).[12] And growing Western awareness of the "Holocaust by bullets" also raised questions around collaboration and complicity on the part of local populations.[13] At the same time, the groups of those who were belatedly recognized as victims also broadened, and this too led to a widening of the circles of those who could be considered culpable or complicit. The greater availability of archival and oral evidence from across eastern Europe brought to visibility, for example, the millions of people who had been constrained to "volunteer" or unwillingly deported for forced labor. Even if few former employers of forced labor, medical professionals involved in eugenic engineering, or civilian administrators in relevant institutions or occupied territories were ever willing to acknowledge personal responsibility, these groups now increasingly came under the historical spotlight alongside more obvious perpetrators. Meanwhile, questions about the complicity or involvement of members of the wider population, including within the Reich – some of

[11] C. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York, HarperCollins, 1992); see also T. Pegelow Kaplan, J. Matthäus, and M. Hornburg (eds.), *Beyond "Ordinary Men": Christopher R. Browning and Holocaust Historiography* (Paderborn, Brill Schöningh, 2019).

[12] See, for example, H. Heer and K. Naumann (eds.), *War of Extermination: The German Military in World War II, 1941–1944* (New York, Berghahn, 2000 [1995]); C. Hartmann, J. Hürter, and U. Jureit (eds.), *Verbrechen der Wehrmacht: Bilanz einer Debatte* (Munich, C. H. Beck, 2005).

[13] P. Desbois, *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews* (Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

whom felt "empowered" by the Nazi conception of the "national community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*) – became a major focus of controversy.[14]

Everywhere, in the decades after the war, states and societies experienced difficulties in coming to terms with the explosion of violence and wide cooperation with Nazi persecution across Europe. According to geopolitical and historical context, there were different tempos involved in any public confrontations or "coming to terms" with complicity in mass murder, dependent not only on what had happened at the time but also, crucially, on later contexts. Periodically, public and scholarly debates erupted that brought together, for example, questions of a supposed "double genocide" linking experiences of Stalinism and Nazism, or that sought to draw connections with colonialism and genocides elsewhere. Questions around singularity and comparability, and the entanglements of past violence and present concerns, complicated historical approaches to the Holocaust without necessarily affecting established public narratives about the past.[15]

Even as it receded into a more distant past, from the later twentieth century the Holocaust was increasingly becoming an internationally recognized reference point for the affirmation of common values, supposedly learning the lessons of the past, and aspiring for a better future. Museums, exhibitions, remembrance days, and ceremonies came to embody or enact expressions of veneration and respect accorded to survivors, and to affirm the values of human rights, toleration, and dignity. Symbolic gestures of compensation for forced and slave laborers were finally agreed by the end of the twentieth century, while memorials to previously marginalized groups – Roma and Sinti, gay men, victims of "euthanasia" killings – began to spring up, most notably in Berlin, capital of the newly united Germany. Curiously, however, public representations and perceptions remained out of line with historiographical developments: the growing attention paid to victims and survivors in public sites and ceremonies was not always accompanied by a broadening of popular conceptions about who was primarily responsible, and the tendency to focus on specific individual perpetrators or organizations such as the SS remained predominant in the public sphere.

[14] M. Wildt, *Hitler's Volksgemeinschaft and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion: Violence against Jews in Provincial Germany, 1919–1939*, trans. B. Heise (New York, Berghahn Books, 2012 [2007]); M. Steber and B. Gotto (eds.), *Visions of Community in Nazi Germany: Social Engineering and Private Lives* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014).

[15] These issues are explored also in other volumes in this series, particularly Volume IV.

THE HOLOCAUST AS COMPLEX AND EVOLVING PROCESS: CURRENT APPROACHES

Current research on perpetration in the Holocaust, as reflected in contributions to this volume, is altogether far more complex than earlier (and still widely prevalent) popular perceptions of "Hitler and his henchmen" or concentration on the supposed distinctiveness of antisemitism in Germany might suggest. At times rather at odds with popular perceptions of perpetrators and memorialization of victims, there have been major historiographical developments in perpetrator research, with new theoretical emphases as well as a proliferation of research on different aspects of persecution and mass murder right across Europe. Significant questions have been addressed not only about Germany, but also about ethnonationalism and antisemitism in other states, the possible links with colonialist experiences and aspirations, and the importance of changing arenas of war. Furthermore, shifts in emphasis have both been informed by differing theoretical perspectives and in turn stimulated the generation of new insights from those perspectives.

The primary focus on Germany has shifted in several significant respects. For many decades, and particularly since the heated debates between "intentionalists" and "functionalists" of the 1980s, historical analyses focused primarily on the role of Hitler – variously described as a "strong" or a "weak dictator" – within the structures of power in the Reich itself.[16] The ways in which the Nazi regime could better be described as a "polycratic" rather than "totalitarian" state, with underlings "working towards" the charismatic Führer (as Ian Kershaw noted), arguably won the scholarly case, as historians uncovered ever more instances of competing rivalries and overlapping spheres of authority.[17] But this did little to remove the term "totalitarian" from the arena of public debate, where rather simpler conceptions of a streamlined dictatorship remained predominant – although with striking differences regarding the extent to which it was held to be based on terror and repression or enthusiasm and ideological indoctrination. Similarly,

[16] See, for example, G. Hirschfeld and L. Kettenacker (eds.), *Der "Führerstaat": Mythos und Realität. Studien zur Struktur und Politik des Dritten Reiches* (Stuttgart, DVA, 1981); H. Mommsen, 'The realization of the unthinkable', in H. Mommsen, *From Weimar to Auschwitz: Essays on German History* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 224–53.

[17] I. Kershaw, '"Working towards the Führer". Reflections on the nature of the Hitler dictatorship', *CEH* 2:2 (1993), 103–18.

a seemingly incessant search for a definitive "Hitler order" unleashing the "Final Solution" eventually ceded to recognition of the greater complexity of policy shifts taking place over time, with changing considerations in different arenas of the war. This was accompanied by growing interest in the importance of the interrelationships between the "center" and the peripheries, as initiatives from both above and below served to fuel growing radicalization of policies and practices at different times and places.

Increasingly, although the focus on significant individuals has remained, with important biographies of prominent figures such as Hitler, Himmler, Heydrich, or Speer, and explorations of far less well-known figures, historians have generally moved away from an individualizing notion of "the perpetrator" as (pathological, extraordinary) identity.[18] Recent scholarship tends to focus rather on understanding the conditions under which some individuals could attain historical prominence; the broader processes through which "ordinary" people could become mobilized and actively involved in Nazi organizations and networks, or variously caught up in acts of perpetration under certain conditions; and, in some cases, also how perpetrators who made it across the 1945 divide, as in the case of Albert Speer, could rewrite their own life stories in the aftermath. A growing number of studies have looked at Germans involved in occupation policies, including at various levels of the civil administration.[19]

Moreover, more institutions and professions were implicated in European-wide plans for reorganization and restructuring of societies under German domination than had been assumed when the sphere of perpetrators was conceived as primarily limited to the direct organizers and executors of physical violence. More broadly, organizations and social collectives provided frameworks for rewarded and expected behaviors, on the one hand, and constraints on the extent to which it was possible to deviate significantly

[18] Significant biographies include, for example, I. Kershaw, *Hitler. 1936–1945: Nemesis* (New York, Norton & Company, 2000); P. Longerich, *Heinrich Himmler*, trans. J. Noakes and L. Sharpe (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012); R. Gerwarth, *Hitler's Hangman: The Life of Heydrich* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012); M. Brechtken, *Albert Speer: Eine deutsche Karriere* (Munich, Siedler, 2017). On less well-known Nazis, see, for example, A. J. Kay, *The Making of an SS Killer: The Life of Colonel Alfred Filbert, 1905–1990* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016); W. Wette, *Karl Jäger: Mörder der litauischen Juden* (Frankfurt am Main, Fischer Verlag, 2011).

[19] See, for example, C. Dieckmann, *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941–1944* (Göttingen, Wallstein Verlag, 2011); S. Lehnstaedt, *Occupation in the East: The Daily Lives of German Occupiers in Warsaw and Minsk, 1939–1944*, trans. M. Dean (New York, Berghahn Books, 2016); C. Epstein, *Model Nazi: Arthur Greiser and the Occupation of Western Poland* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010); M. Fulbrook, *A Small Town near Auschwitz: Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012).

from dominant norms or expectations within a particular group, on the other.[20] And leaderships continually adjusted the aims and character of organizations according to circumstances, with an eye both to immediate power struggles or competition for resources and to longer-term strategies in light of the changing fortunes of war. As a result, the interactions between individuals, institutions, and periods of persecution have received increased scholarly attention.

Even as there was growing awareness in the historiography of the need for a wider focus, a recognition of the fact that far more people were involved in making the Holocaust possible than earlier approaches had suggested, there remained difficulties with the terminology of, for example, "perpetrators," complicity, and "bystanders." Particularly with the growth of microhistorical and regional studies it has become ever more apparent that contexts affected the extent to which and ways in which Nazi policies could be implemented on the ground.[21] While there are growing numbers of significant regional or microhistorical studies, varying levels of local collaboration and their interrelation with German measures have not as yet been brought into a wider systematic framework even within either eastern or western Europe, let alone bringing these perspectives together. It has also become increasingly clear that individuals could move relatively rapidly from acts of support or sympathy for victims at one moment to complicity with perpetrators at another; motives could range dramatically according to circumstances, from opportunism or greed, through fear or indeed terror, to extraordinary generosity or a sense of common humanity.

Theoretical developments in diverse fields include the analysis of gender with regard not only to the roles of women, or gendered differences in experiences, but also, particularly, to the significance of constructions of masculinity in the Holocaust.[22] The creation and use of images by Nazis, victims, and others raise questions about the ways in which the process of mass murder was both represented and yet also rendered invisible, as well as about the challenges posed by the use of Nazi imagery by scholars and for

[20] See, for example, S. Kühl, *Ordinary Organisations: Why Normal Men Carried Out the Holocaust* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2016); T. Kuehne, *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918–1945* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2010).

[21] See D. Gaunt, P. Levine, and L. Palosuo (eds.), *Collaboration and Resistance during the Holocaust: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania* (Bern, Peter Lang, 2004).

[22] Pathbreaking works on women involved in perpetration include E. Harvey, *Women and the Nazi East: Agents and Witnesses of Germanization* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003); W. Lower, *Hitler's Furies* (London, Vintage, 2014). The state of research on a wide range of groups is addressed in the chapters that follow in this volume.

wider publics. Scholarship has paid increasing attention to the ways in which antisemitism may have been less a primary motivating force, and rather a repertoire of prejudices – both older religious tropes and more recent "racial" stereotypes – which could be drawn on selectively (as in the construction of "Judeo-Bolshevism"). The ways in which "othering" extended far beyond notions of "the Jew" as the direct target of antisemitic ideology, to include Roma and Sinti ("gypsies"), people with mental and physical disabilities, and others deemed a potential danger ("Bolsheviks"), hindrance ("useless eaters"), or in other ways an impediment to Nazi aspirations, and how these ideas developed into policies of mass murder, have come under increased scrutiny. Here as elsewhere, however, much remains to be done on policies and practices of social discrimination and exclusion (there is relatively little to date, for example, by way of syntheses bringing together research on homophobia).

The distinctiveness of German policies within the wider European sphere has been subjected to revision in two key respects. First of all, Germany was not alone in positing a "Jewish question," and was able to act on Nazi ideological aspirations only in the wider context of degrees of willingness – for a variety of reasons, some ideological, others pragmatic – in other quarters to collaborate, to concede, not to obstruct or otherwise hinder the achievement of Nazi aims. The shifts evident in Germany were in some ways distinctive, and always contested, but occurred within a wider context where broadly similar movements were stirring – and where indeed there had already been significant antecedents in terms of both murderous violence and resort to antisemitic ideology, as evidenced in the pogroms in Ukraine after the First World War.[23] In the wake of the Depression, the 1930s marked a political shift to the right in central and southeastern Europe, energizing ethnonationalist tendencies evident since the end of the nineteenth century and exacerbated by the consequences of the First World War.[24] Nazi Germany's aggressive pursuit of revisionist policies added stimulus, particularly with its targeting of Jews.

[23] On the pogroms in Ukraine in the aftermath of the First World War, when Jews and "Bolshevism" became closely associated in ways that predated Nazi conceptions of "Judeo-Bolshevism," see J. Veidlinger, *In the Midst of Civilized Europe: The Pogroms of 1918–1921 and the Onset of the Holocaust* (New York, Metropolitan Books, 2021).

[24] See *Cambridge History of the Holocaust*, Vol. I, 'Part II, The Holocaust in Its Context'; D. Bloxham, *The Final Solution: A Genocide* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 35–105; R. Segal, *Genocide in the Carpathians: War, Social Breakdown, and Mass Violence, 1914–1945* (Palo Alto, CA, Stanford University Press, 2016).

Secondly, the Holocaust needs to be understood transnationally. In terms of exerting influence over other European countries, the Third Reich practiced what could be called imperialist populism: with its propaganda utilizing the transnational, in many cases class-transcending, appeal of antisemitic and anti-Bolshevist slogans, Nazism sought to compensate for its blatantly self-centered, even domestically increasingly ruthless, policies by posing as the best-equipped defender against an alleged internationally networked common enemy. As with populist tactics in general, German leaders were aware that propaganda was most effective when it not only confirmed existing phobias and biases, but also legitimized interests prevailing among elites and broader social strata. Across Europe, anti-Jewish perceptions varied widely, ranging from religiously rooted Jew-hatred, through ideological obsession with "racial purity," to opportunistic materialism, frequently all in a muddled mix. Nazi propagandists would offer a smorgasbord of more or less attractive options, leaving it to their audiences to pick and choose.

Taken together, while this volume is thematically organized, the chapters follow a kind of narrative arc that in some ways resembles the historical process, from Hitler, through the wide range of groups and organizations involved in different places in peace and war, to perpetrators of all stripes during the death marches, radicalized by twelve years of Nazi rule and feeling empowered to kill defenceless "others." Key moments and locations are dealt with in depth, including the Reinhardt camps and Auschwitz. A concluding chapter reflects more broadly on ways in which the Holocaust was not only a German but also a European project.

TOWARDS AN ENHANCED AND MORE FULLY INTEGRATED APPROACH

As a consequence of this volume addressing societal and other forces relevant for the planning and perpetration of Nazi genocide, it reflects the mechanics and machinations of people directly or indirectly involved in the Holocaust – to the point where readers are exposed to the self-centered thought-processes of mass killers, as in the case of Auschwitz commander Rudolf Höss reflecting after the war about his feeling of being overpowered by the logistical challenges of having to organize techniques to murder and dispose of the bodies of hundreds of thousands of women, men, and children as fast and as

systematically as possible. Such neglect of the most basic human considerations leaves no room for victims, yet it takes us to a place defined by preceding developments that enabled the evolution of stereotypical thinking and discriminatory policy into genocide.

What then of the demand for an "integrated history"? It seems to us that, for the purposes of this contribution to a four-volume series on the Holocaust, there are several answers, some pragmatic and others more fundamental, but all making the case for a deeper, more expansive scholarly engagement of the "integration" concept.

With the proliferation of perpetrator research on so many facets of the Holocaust, and across so many arenas of war and violence, there is a compelling need to summarize and address the current state of play on different groups and types of involvement in perpetration at different stages and geopolitical locations during the war. Many of the chapters that follow do precisely this: contributions analyze developments from the Baltics to the Balkans, from the west to the east, and explore key differences between different areas with respect to ghettoization, deportations, collaboration, or attempts at escape or relief. Taken together with the other volumes in the series, the contributions in this volume go a long way towards integration in the sense of reflecting current knowledge about the Holocaust, its antecedents, agents, victims, consequences, and scholarly representation. Furthermore, in line with the view that antisemitism is less about "Jews" than about images held and actions taken by non-Jewish groups and societies, genocide has to do more broadly with the forces that cause mass violence against defined and ostracized "others." Scholarly integration should therefore aim beyond simply striving to merge stories about groups of perpetrators and specific victims in one narrative.

More fundamentally, perhaps, we need to engage more explicitly with what an "integrated approach" actually could or should mean. In our view, it is not just a question of recounting a narrative driven primarily by Nazi policies, while adding in the voices of victims to portray vividly, in their own words, the personal impact of and reactions to these policies, disrupting an otherwise seamless scholarly account by reminding readers of the ultimately incomprehensible character of what we are seeking to explain – although precisely these are the magnificent achievements of Saul Friedländer's influential magnum opus.[25] An integrated account, in our view, is or should be

[25] Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*. Cf. A. Confino, 'Narrative form and historical sensation: On Saul Friedländer's *The Years of Extermination*', *History and Theory* 48 (2009), 199–219.

aspiring to do more. It is also about intrinsically embedding the responses of the persecuted and others at the time within explanations of the extent to which perpetrators were able (or not) to achieve their aims. Even as we focus on understanding the institutions and agents of perpetration, we cannot understand their actions and impact without also, at the same time, analyzing the situations and agency of victims at every stage in an evolving process – ghettoization, hiding, escape, strategies for survival – as well as exploring reactions among members of the surrounding societies or non-persecuted populations to the ongoing violence in their midst. We believe integration should include an investigation of what Donald Bloxham calls "the individual in the system, the system in the individual" by analyzing perpetration within the wider context of structural phenomena, such as nationalism, racism, and antisemitism, that are constitutive to modern societies and thus extend into the present.[26]

The complicated history of the Holocaust involved the complex interactions of multiple actors, under ever-changing circumstances. So, taken together, the four volumes in this series explore numerous and disparate facets in depth; and, while each volume has its distinctive center of concentration or primary focus, nowhere can perpetration be addressed without also addressing the perceptions and actions of the targets and victims of violence, and the wider responses of others, within differing and continually changing contexts. Europe at the time of Nazi domination, aggression, and genocidal warfare has to be explored in all its complexity and detail, without ever losing sight of the world-historical significance and horror of the human devastation unleashed by the Nazis and carried out with the widespread collaboration, complicity, or constrained and coerced compliance of millions across the continent, even as others suffered and remained largely impotent. To focus here on facets and arenas of perpetration is to contribute to the task, far from finished even after decades of scholarly and public engagement, of creating a more comprehensive understanding of how such a vast and complex undertaking could be developed and executed, resulting in almost unthinkable tragedy for so many.

[26] Bloxham, *The Final Solution*, pp. 261–3.