A COMPANION TO THE HOLOCAUST

EDITED BY

Simone Gigliotti and Hilary Earl

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A Companion to the Holocaust
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Introduction

SIMONE GIGLIOTTI AND HILARY EARL

In the congested field of Holocaust studies, is there room for yet another collection of essays claiming to offer new directions in research and pedagogy? The event that has come to be termed “the Holocaust” has a long and multilingual history that has been expressed in testimonies, documents, and visual culture. The historian Philip Friedman lamented the early postwar work of amateur historians whose impulse was to record the minutiae of everyday life as a type of “graphomania.”¹ The poor quality of these works, as he believed them to be, may yet find enduring if not unfortunate resonance in the current plethora of books, materials, and films that profess new findings and reinterpretations of the works and words of established and globally iconic survivors. While not advocating the “forced disappearance” of today’s “amateur scholars,” as was Friedman’s ambition, it is time to reflect on eight decades of knowledge and inquiry. If the events that we now call the Holocaust have been diluted into generality, abstraction, and clichés, divested of their local geographies and foundations in European history and politics, what is there “left” for scholars to do? What tools do scholars have to reenergize a field of scholarship that moves beyond stereotype and sentiment in public culture and discourse, and furthermore, encourages local conversations in countries with their own difficult relationships to histories of refuge, rescue, and persecution of Jewish and non-Jewish groups?

A Companion to the Holocaust is a decidedly noncompliant and idiosyncratic attempt to reenergize and re-“place” a field of scholarship that is highly prolific, diverse, and increasingly disrupted through popular culture and digital technology. Yet this field of scholarship is still dominated by narrative models such as that first offered by Raul Hilberg, in The Destruction of the European Jews (1961). Hilberg, widely described as one of the “founding fathers” of Holocaust scholarship, provided a model by which to understand the complexities of state-sponsored violence and totalitarianism. While the perpetrator, victim, and bystander model continues to influence how scholars think and discuss causation, criminality, and complicity, Hilberg, it must be said, was not the only

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scholar to think about these categories and, indeed, there were forebears in this far-reaching interpretative effort.

As a way to work through the psychological trauma of the one hundred or so persons he interviewed in Displaced Persons’ camps across Europe in the summer of 1946, David Boder set about to create a list of terms that he referred to as a “traumatic inventory.” If a similar method is applied to the vast inventory of Holocaust studies scholarship, Boder’s method may be diagnostic, even instructive. In examining the vocabulary of the Holocaust’s interpretative landscape, we find a core register of tropes and phrases that reflect the evolution, if not fatigue, about how the events, processes, and perpetration of the Holocaust have been rhetorically freighted, gendered, and located: the banality of evil, ordinary men, Hitler’s willing executioners, the *Muselmann*, the grey zone, the drowned and the saved, machinery of destruction, bloodlands, the Holocaust by Bullets, and never again. These phrases find currency in scholars’ ongoing efforts to understand and narrate the Holocaust, providing audiences with an ostensibly secure knowledge about judgment, responsibility, and choice. They bring us no closer, however, to the challenges of scholarship in this area, not simply in terms of motivation and inheritance, but also in terms of the financial and intellectual infrastructure that produces it: archival research and access, publication strategies with university presses and journals, funding for research, the surge in precarious faculty appointments alongside tenure-track and endowed faculty positions, language competency, methodological approaches, and intellectual influences and limitations. How can current and future intellectual practices be conducted and funded in ethical and engaged ways that achieve the ambition that rigorous scholarship on the Holocaust demands – to minimize cliché and embrace individual, historical, political, and social context, contingency, and ambiguity?

Hilberg’s enduring model of the entanglement of protagonists – (perpetrator), targeted group (victim), and observer (bystander) – rarely practised the integrated method of inquiry that Saul Friedländer would later utilize in his award-winning two-volume work, *Nazi Germany and the Jews.* Indeed, Hilberg’s vision of the “Final Solution” was an early statement of state-sponsored genocide as implementation, paralysis, and observation. It kept perpetrators, victims, and bystanders together, yet apart. It was this superficial togetherness that foregrounded “perpetrator history,” and with it began the dominance of the most “objective” field of Holocaust-related inquiry for four decades. It was not until the early 2000s when much overdue attention to fashioning a “Jewish history” of the Holocaust emerged. Such histories utilized Yiddish and Eastern European-language sources (such as Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian) and revived attention to early histories of documenting the destruction, or *Khurbn*, during wartime and in the early postwar years. These document collections included extensive and contemporaneous ghetto chronicles such as the *Oneg Shabbes* archive from the Warsaw Ghetto. Other ghetto documentation initiatives include those pioneered and evaluated by Jewish historical commissions in Lublin under the direction of Philip Friedman, the United Nations War Crimes Commission, those across Eastern and Central Europe, those in Displaced Persons camps, and those across Europe, more generally. The coexistence of these parallel but profoundly varying versions of the Nazi regime’s impact has recently produced rewritings of the Holocaust as restorative ethno-history and as multidirectional pivots. These examples include Dan Michman’s *Holocaust Historiography: A Jewish Perspective* (2003), Norman Goda’s edited collections, *Jewish Histories of the Holocaust: New Transnational Approaches* (2014), and *Rethinking Holocaust Justice: Essays across Disciplines* (2017) as well as new geographies, as in Aomar Boum and Sarah A. Stein’s
edited collection, *The Holocaust and North Africa* (2018). These books, and the chapters in *A Companion to the Holocaust*, do not altogether abandon the rhetorical convenience of “perpetrators, victims, and bystanders.” Rather, they encourage readers to chase and define new terms and understandings that are “fit for purpose” and speak to emerging trends and disruptions from a multitude of disciplines, archives, and scholarly influences.

The chapters assembled in *A Companion to the Holocaust* orient new places, introduce new protagonists, and reappraise the historical contexts and locations that produced the events we now call the Holocaust. They also address the difficulties in stretching the utility of “the Holocaust” to local and global impacts of the Nazi regime: for example, the micro-contexts and shifting localities of the places of persecution, refugees’ multiple displacements, from the local to the transnational and colonial, from Jewish to Muslim, and from sexual to public ritualized violence. The forty contributors to this *Companion* demonstrate how scholarship in the field commonly known as “Holocaust studies” can develop beyond clichéd models of evil, goodness, and righteous individuals. Doubtless, many of the chapters tackle these clichés head-on, embracing and questioning their relevance, if not providing a granular microhistory of concepts (such as “the grey zone”), before they became moral and seemingly universal motifs.

In the philosophy of its curation *A Companion to the Holocaust* represents a nonteleological approach that resists the notion that one guidebook, reference work, or field survey can reflect or represent the state of the field. For example, *A Companion to the Holocaust* acknowledges the contributions of *The Columbia Guide to the Holocaust* (2003) and Peter Hayes and John K. Roth (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (2010) in forging a metanarrative statement on Holocaust research and teaching directions. The *Columbia Guide*, for example, addresses the Holocaust through a structure that reinforces chronology over geography. Its content includes longstanding historiographical themes structured around the Hilbergian paradigm (perpetrators, victims, bystanders), which many scholars have not essentially challenged as a principal model to guide inquiry and writing. The *Oxford Handbook* follows a similar model of chronological unfolding to the *Columbia Guide* although it does insert themes, structure, and agency into the narrative. The *Oxford Handbook* is perhaps the closest in ambition to *A Companion to the Holocaust* but its publication year unsurprisingly renders it outdated. Intense and recent debates about bloodlands, borderlands, and communal and mass violence, for example, have reshaped how the unfolding of the Nazi genocide must be explained in relation to local violence and occupation policies in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Additionally, the multitude of geographical rims and transnational routes covered in *A Companion to the Holocaust* suggest that even the new subfield of Holocaust geographies has some distance to travel beyond Western, Central, Eastern, southern and northern Europe to consider Nazi-induced migrations and displacement in global locations and connect with scholarship that has long considered these migrations as part of Jewish refugee and exile studies, but not essentially, as Holocaust “history.” These interpretive tensions, of where to “place,” and how to “write,” the Holocaust’s dispersed global and narrative impacts, flow through *A Companion to the Holocaust*.

The main point of difference of *A Companion to the Holocaust* is its innovation in geographical coverage, topical range, and contributor profile. It injects new language, geographies, and approaches into the study of the field, focusing on the local antecedents of the Holocaust and the event’s global ramifications from the time of the event
through to the present. It also has a distinctly global ambition in its attention to non-
European and non-western geographies, interethnic tensions and violence, and a nonto-
kenistic approach to “other victims.” We anticipate some dissatisfaction, however,
because readers are not provided with custom chapters on histories of antisemitism,7
religion and Christianity,8 Sinti and Roma,9 the disabled, and victims of medical experi-
ments,10 and many other victim groups of the Nazis. Nor does A Companion include
dedicated chapters on global diasporas, rescue schemes, or refugees’ pathways to South-
East Asia, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, or Africa.11 There are also
omissions on topics such as forensic archaeology,12 virtual realities, memoryscapes and
survivors,13 and digital methods.14 A genuine appreciation of these digitally related topics
requires a heavily geo-visual, cartographic, and sensory experience through new media
platforms, GIS software, and artificial and virtual reality environments to maximize their
appreciation. While the technological advent of these research areas is foregrounded in
some chapters of A Companion to the Holocaust, their deep and richly diverse “meta-
immersive” exploration cannot be presented and fully appreciated in text form without
a supporting interactive, web-based platform or product.

These foregoing omissions were the outcome, therefore, of a variety of factors: edito-
rial choice, scholars’ availability, and a nonconformist attitude we adopted to what a
scoping work such as this volume might do and achieve in relation to other titles that
sufficiently cover these topics in monographs, journal articles, and indeed, in emerging
research areas that are disrupting “traditional” modes of Holocaust scholarship and
delivering its future learning into the world of cultural industry, artificial intelligence,
and virtual reality experience products.15

The remit to our contributors was as follows: to provide an up-to-date and synthetic
contribution of their particular research fields, integrating historiographical discussion,
drawing on archival evidence (however that archive was defined in relation to their topic),
and provide a recommended reading list at the end of their chapters. The resulting struc-
tural division of the book into six themes with thirty-six chapters represents the concept of
disaggregated knowledge. This concept pulls out, from the prolific activity in current
scholarship, key moments and orientations that are shaping research agendas, authored by
PhD students, early career researchers, established and esteemed scholars in European,
Jewish, and German history, and scholars from anthropology, art history, cultural studies,
economic history, geography, international relations, law, literature, and political science in
many countries of the world (Australia, Canada, Israel, Germany, Italy, Norway, the United
Kingdom, and the United States). These chapters are testaments to the global contours of
Holocaust studies’ scholarship in this present moment and its predicted condition: they are
research preoccupations and collaborations, conversations and disagreements between
authors, they deliver multidisciplinary integrations and rebuttals, and combine multilin-
gual and transnational efforts to disrupt the Eurocentrism and gendered models of writing
violence and impact in Holocaust studies. Taken collectively, these chapters suggest, and
unsettlingly so (for historians such as the editors), that disciplines such as history are no
longer privileged or prioritized as the learning public’s primary custodian or emissary of
truths about the Holocaust. Our aims, therefore, for what we wanted to achieve with the
volume for students, teachers, faculty, and scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds,
was not so much as to keep up with current scholarship but rather to identify the most
important interventions and innovations of the last two decades, many of which are becom-
ing cemented as subfields in their own right (Holocaust geographies, digital cultures,
witnessing histories and futures, and comparative genocide).
A Companion to the Holocaust is organized according to themes that represent topical interventions. Historical chronology has not been a guiding principle in organization; rather, present and co-situated histories that argue for transnationalism, marginality, and multidisciplinary scholarship as the future of Holocaust studies are prioritized. Each of the book’s themes starts with a framing chapter that establishes the theoretical and conceptual context for subsequent chapters. Readers will notice considerable attention to Jewish histories, genocide, regional geographies beyond Europe (North Africa, the Arab world, South Africa, Australia, and Canada), Holocaust witnessing, human rights, gendered and “queer” violence, and visual culture. Synergies are to be found within and across the six themes and associated chapters, and we recommend readers to extract chapters as relevant to their research and teaching.

**Theme 1: New Orientations and Topical Integrations** contains five chapters that demonstrate new possibilities for thinking alternatively (with new questions, locations, temporal focuses), comparatively (with other genocides, nations, and ethnicities), and inclusively (with multiple ethnic voices and historical sources). Devin O. Pendas’s “‘Final Solution,’ Holocaust, Shoah, or Genocide? From Separate to Integrated Histories” (Chapter 1) provides an overview of the trajectories of Holocaust scholarship from its earliest incarnation as a Jewish struggle for survival to persistent debates about Holocaust uniqueness. The chapter explores the challenges and tensions of writing about the “Final Solution” and Holocaust within the fields of Jewish history, German history, and comparative genocide studies. It also illustrates how different sources and methodological approaches have been used by scholars to explain Nazi criminality, Jewish victimization, and state-sponsored violence. After almost eight decades of competing narratives, focus, and methods, Pendas concludes that Saul Friedländer’s approach of integrated histories has succeeded in resolving some – but not all – major historiographical debates and methodological problems.

In “Raphael Lemkin and Genocide before the Holocaust: Ethnic and Religious Minorities under Attack” (Chapter 2), Cathie Carmichael shifts the geography and time frame to the border regions (or “rimlands” as Mark Levene now calls the most unstable places) of Soviet territory in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth century. It is here – before the horrors of World War II and the “Final Solution” were known or experienced by Europe’s Jews – where Raphael Lemkin, the pioneer scholar-activist, learned about the possibilities, purpose, and techniques of state-sponsored violence against a myriad of ethnic minorities. Carmichael compels readers to reorient their thinking about “origins” and the history of organized and systemic state violence against European ethnic minorities and the interconnectedness of victims’ experiences.

Not to diminish the particular experience of Europe’s Jews, but rather to contextualize the origins of state-sponsored violence against ethnic and religious minorities, Carmichael highlights Lemkin’s biographical and intellectual migrations, and his emerging solidarity with Armenians, Assyrians, and other ethnic minorities. As she notes, he witnessed violence against civilians in the tumultuous world of Eastern Europe where he lived until his forced migration, and it was persistent state-sponsored violence that led him to his ideas about group violence and ultimately the novel classification of genocide.

From Carmichael’s biographical orientation to a close reading of the early years of the Third Reich, Dan Stone’s “Ideologies of Race: The Construction and Suppression of Otherness in Nazi Germany” (Chapter 3) explores the scientific antecedents that
contributed to Nazi genocidal violence. Stone’s chapter analyzes the ways in which Nazism expanded nineteenth-century constructions of racial difference and adapted them to the persecution of Jews in Germany and Europe. He locates his discussion during the 1920s and 1930s when the practices of exclusion of different groups (Jews, political opponents, foreigners, ethnic minorities, immigrants, the disabled, sexual outsiders), as well as on the institutional and medicalized responses to containing dissent and punishing deviance among German and non-German populations was initiated. Stone suggests that historians are now moving beyond the concept of the “racial state” as the only category of analysis, not because race is irrelevant as he concludes, but rather because it is not, in and of itself, a pure and singular category of analysis.

Whereas Stone explores race as a singular category for understanding Nazi policy, the aim of William J. Spurlin’s “Queering Holocaust Studies: New Frameworks for Understanding Nazi Homophobia and the Politics of Sexuality under National Socialism” (Chapter 4) is to rethink dominant categories of historical understanding and relocate and integrate “the submerged voices of lesbian and gay victims of the Nazi Holocaust.” Spurlin deepens our historical understanding of violence and the broader category of genocide by focusing on the experiences of gay men and lesbians under National Socialism. The chapter places Nazi homophobia within the context of social constructions of racial and sexual deviancy. It argues that Nazi homophobia, rather than being a separate axis of power, was part of a larger system of social and cultural organization and was an effect of specific historical, material, and ideological conditions. Spurlin concludes by addressing the postwar criminalization of homosexuality in the former West Germany until 1968, a range of efforts to recognize in Germany and elsewhere the crimes perpetrated against gay men and lesbians, and ongoing struggles to have this persecution history acknowledged officially in compensation claims, museums, and memorialization practices.

Daniel Blatman’s “The Holocaust as Genocide: Milestones in the Historiographical Discourse” (Chapter 5) explores one of the most contentious debates in the field – the Holocaust’s ostensible uniqueness and comparability. Like Carmichael, Blatman positions the Holocaust in the realm of genocide studies. It is from that context that he critically examines the “placements” of the Holocaust over time, noting its most important movements from Jewish history to its contentious location in comparative genocide studies. Blatman notes that scholarly efforts to push the origins of the Holocaust to its current place in colonial and imperial European history began in the 1980s and 1990s with the efforts of sociologists and political scientists such as Robert Melson and Helen Fein. To some extent, although certainly not easily or across the board, comparative genocide research has had a methodological influence on Holocaust studies, bringing together the historian’s craft with the social scientists’ generalist theories as can be seen in the innovative and integrated work of scholars such as Mark Levene.16

Theme 2: Plunder, Extermination, and Prosecution contains five chapters that explore three distinct but related fields that coalesce historically (and in terms of this volume) in the mistreatment, exploitation, humiliation, and ultimate death of millions of victims (non-Jews and Jews), the reasons for their murder, and how they are dealt with after the war. Edward B. Westermann’s “Old Nazis, Ordinary Men, New Killers: Synthetic and Divergent Histories of Perpetrators” (Chapter 6), illustrates the one-dimensionality of the endurably popular, but dated stereotype of the jack-booted, sadistic, and brainwashed SS man. The chapter surveys debates about the motivations and behavior of perpetrators in Nazi Germany, occupied Eastern Europe, and collaborationist Western and Southern Europe, as well as the structures and systems that nurtured
violence and persecution, including the German army (Wehrmacht) and the Security Service or SD (Sicherheitsdienst). It highlights new research paradigms about individual and group motivations, Nazi occupation policies, biographical approaches to Nazi administrators in the occupied east such as Bettina Stangneth’s biography of Adolf Eichmann. Westermann traces these themes through controversies including the “Ordinary Men vs. Ordinary German” debate, barbarization and militarism, redemptive antisemitism, Bloodlands and colonial genocide, the final years of the Nazi regime, and the role of women in camps and killing fields.

When the Nazis came to power in 1933 the unemployment rate in Germany was close to thirty percent. This labor crisis changed in 1936 through the creation of the rearmament program: as production demands increased and the war turned into attrition on the Eastern Front, the Germans increasingly relied on domestic and foreign slave laborers, mostly non-Jews. Mark Spoerer highlights the evolution and diversity of this slave labor industry in “The Nazi War Economy, the Forced Labor System, and the Murder of Jewish and Non-Jewish Workers” (Chapter 7). He traces the slave labor practices of the Germans from their inception to demise, highlighting two important intersections with the Holocaust: Jews who were worked to death in the ghettos and camps, and Slavs (mostly Poles and Russians) who were targeted as racially inferior subhumans and destined for murder as well, but who because of changing contexts were used as laborers first. Spoerer’s quantitative approach reveals important new avenues of research: questions about slave labor outside the Reich and the ideology and motives that shaped the expansion of slave labor networks.

Millions of European slave laborers died while advancing the German war effort. This forced contribution fed the iconic image of the Holocaust as an industrial, impersonal, and bureaucratic genocide, committed by elite SS Germans, and prosecuted as such in a number of “industrialists” trials at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg. The image of the impersonal genocide with bureaucrats such as Eichmann, elite industrial firms such as Krupp and IG Farben told a limited part of this transnational collaboration in mass death. Indeed the image of elite and distanced killing was shattered nearly two decades ago with the publication of Jan Tomasz Gross’s Neighbors. Gross used court documents to show how a community of Poles from Jedwabne turned on and murdered their Jewish neighbors in the summer of 1941. Further adding to the scholarship on communal violence is Omer Bartov’s recent study of the multiethnic town, Buczacz, which is an integrated history of local genocide, and a disturbing and multivocal history of beneficiaries, accomplices, and killers.

Similar to Gross and Bartov, Waitman Wade Beorn’s chapter studies mass violence in Eastern Europe, where victims and perpetrators often lived side by side. “All the Other Neighbors: Communal Genocide in Eastern Europe” (Chapter 8) examines the Bloodlands as a significantly intimate type of genocidal violence. The phenomenon of “communal genocide,” or community-based violence that enables the larger Nazi project of genocide, was carried out by competing ethnic groups in the borderlands of Ukraine (Lwów) and in the context of the politics of occupation where neighbor turned against neighbor, largely for opportunistic reasons, self-betterment, and financial gain. Beorn shows that the violence in these neglected regions often reflected long-suppressed resentment that was the result of years of oppressive Russian and then Soviet occupation, propelled then by the euphoria of the German advance. Violent collaboration, he notes, makes for “painful” national memories in these regions, which unlike the west, are more often politically silenced than remembered.
If the number of Holocaust perpetrators is unquantifiable, as suggested by Beorn and other scholars, how does one arrive at a reliable number of criminals who were investigated, interrogated, and prosecuted for Holocaust-related crimes in courtrooms? In “War Crimes Trials, the Holocaust, and Historiography, 1943–2011” (Chapter 9), Kim Christian Priemel points readers to an additional problem, namely, how does one define a “Holocaust trial”.

Priemel suggests, for instance, that the International Military Tribunal (IMT), which prosecuted twenty-two of the highest ranking Nazi leaders in 1945–1946, is not universally identified as a “Holocaust trial” because its main focus was on the newly defined crimes against peace (aggressive war) and not on the genocide against Europe’s Jews. In Chapter 17, Elisabeth Gallas and Laura Jockusch define the first “Holocaust trial” as that of Adolf Eichmann in 1961, when victims were welcomed and integrated into the trial proceedings. If an agreed definition for “Holocaust trials” is impossible, how can we survey their number, scale, and outcomes? Priemel notes that his survey of Holocaust-related trials is imperfect and selective, as he focuses on only some of the major trials and scholarly and legal debates about post-conflict justice and its relationship to history.

Bianca Gaudenzi’s chapter, “ Crimes against Culture: From Plunder to Postwar Restitution Politics” (Chapter 10) revisits themes of earlier chapters about the intersections between the Nazi expropriation and destruction of Jewish culture and the extensive theft of art and the larger genocidal project against Europe’s Jews. The chapter highlights the postwar prosecution of the range of plunderers and the continuing difficulties in addressing the legacies of those crimes. Crimes against culture, as Raphael Lemkin described in his now famous book, Axis Rule in Occupied Europe (1944), was an act of cultural vandalism and one of the many techniques of genocide. Gaudenzi examines the recovery work of the so-called “monuments men” and the resonance of crimes against art in relation to war, dictatorship, and the current trade in art and antiquities. She shows that historical and current art theft and cultural plunder are important, albeit often-neglected frontiers, of the genocidal destruction of ethnic culture and heritage.

**Theme 3: Reframing Jewish Histories** contains seven chapters that exhibit the latest directions in Jewish and Holocaust studies over the last three decades. Dan Michman’s framing chapter, “Characteristics of Holocaust Historiographies and Their Contexts since 1990: Emphases, Perceptions, Developments, Debates” (Chapter 11) argues that, far from its perception as a lost history, the Holocaust has never been more studied than it has been in the past quarter century. With the collapse of communism and the discovery of new repositories of documents there has been a resurgence in Holocaust research led by the pioneering work of Jan Gross, Timothy Snyder, and Wendy Lower. Alongside other scholars, they have charted the revival of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union as the “central” Holocaust geography. Other factors have enabled this orientation to the “east” in Holocaust scholarship, including the inquiry committees of the 1990s and 2000s and their impact on restitution and apology-oriented research, which became the subject of Michael Marrus’s much-discussed 2009 book, Some Measure of Justice: The Holocaust Era Restitution Campaign of the 1990s.

Reframing old models and categories of analysis were also part of this reorientation as were the development of new methodologies around women and gender, memory and representation, and perpetrator motivation. No single book has been more influential in this regard than Christopher Browning’s, *Ordinary Men*. Browning integrated social science theories with historical methods posed a universalist model that connected individual motivation with crowd behavior. Browning set off a wave of research that has led
to the interdisciplinary study of perpetrators in national, transnational, global, and comparative contexts, and that features in the microhistorical and integrated history, KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps, by Nikolaus Wachsman. As Michman makes clear, the field of Holocaust history and studies has changed dramatically in the years since the collapse of communism.

David Engel’s contribution, “A Sustained Civilian Struggle: Rethinking Jewish Responses to the Nazi Regime,” (Chapter 12) wastes no time discarding the myth of “sheep to the slaughter,” an image perpetuated by Hilberg’s baseless claim that the Holocaust was characterized by “a complete lack of Jewish resistance.” Engel’s reframes “resistance” according to the novel strategies employed by Jewish communities in their many guises and locations in their lengthy confrontation with the Nazi regime. Indeed, he explores the diversity of Jewish responses to systematic forms of violence in the 1930s through outrage, welfare, activism, and mass relocation schemes, and then focusing on the 1940s and the examples of Jewish leaders such as Czerniakov in Warsaw and Rumkowski in Łódź, and their spirited but doomed interactions with Nazi authorities. Engel provides the reader with a new semantic frontier, that of Jews mounting a sustained civilian struggle, as a characteristic response to Nazi violence.

In “Ghettos and Ghettoization – History and Historiography” (Chapter 13), Guy Miron examines the spatial meanings and histories of the ghetto in historiography and charts the ghetto’s evolution as a site of confinement in Nazi regional administrations (1939–41) through to their liquidation in the “Final Solution.” Miron questions the efficacy of the term “ghetto” to describe spatial practices of segregation, movement and, eventually, as a deportation point. Even though the ghettos in Warsaw and Łódź were the largest under Nazi administration (Miron estimates there were more than 1,000 over the course of the war), and often taken as “the norm” of ghetto administration, Miron advocates attention to differences and similarities in ghettoization processes and practices across Europe.

According to volume II of the Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933–1945: Ghettos in German-Occupied Eastern Europe published by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Nazis established more than 40,000 camps and ghettos during their twelve-year reign of terror that imprisoned 15 million people of whom approximately forty percent survived. As one of the authors of these research findings, Martin Dean notes that these statistics are confusing for scholars of the Holocaust since most of the inmates in these camps were not Jews, but rather non-Jewish slave laborers. His chapter, “Survivors of the Holocaust within the Nazi Universe of Camps” (Chapter 14), builds on this research to reconsider the relationship between the murder of Europe’s Jews during World War II and the camp system. Dean reframes the discussion to consider the European geography of the camp system in regions of Nazi influence. This research, largely the result of the massive historiographical shift of the 1990s that Michman described in Chapter 11, expands sites of persecution to camps in different areas of Nazi occupation. Dean augments this focus with a range of sources: the voices of survivors and testimonies found in Yizkor books, testimonies of forced laborers and ghetto inhabitants collected and preserved at the Visual History Archive at the University of Southern California, and records of the International Tracing Service.

The assisted survival of Jews is explored in Natalia Aleksiun’s contribution, “Social Networks of Support: Trajectories of Escape, Rescue, and Survival” (Chapter 15). She probes the relationships between Jews and non-Jews that enabled survival at different
levels in territories under German control or influence, and further explores modest to
memorable interventions from individuals and institutions including the efforts of
Irene Sendler, Varian Fry, Raoul Wallenberg, and Zionist resistance movements. Aleksiun
focuses on a range of survivor groups within shifting terrains if not mobile social net-
works – living under a false identity, hiding in monasteries or convents, or living with
partisans. The fate of survivors within these evolving social and spatial trajectories was
enabled by a different but no less important type of “everyday relief” to that offered by
rescue programs from institutions or by diplomatic initiatives.

The vulnerability of youth during and after World War II is the subject of Joanna B.
Michlic’s contribution, “A Young Person’s War: The Disrupted Lives of Children and
Youth,” (Chapter 16). Of the six million Jewish deaths during World War II, an esti-
imated 1.5 million were children and youth. This figure serves as a permanent reminder
of the special vulnerability of young people in the face of Nazi policies that targeted
Jewish men, women, and children for extermination. While Michlic focuses on the vic-
timization of Polish-Jewish youth, readers are encouraged to situate their fate with stud-
ies of young survivors of the war from other nationalities, ethnic groups, and locations,
such as studies of child forced labor.23

Turning to postwar confrontations, Elisabeth Gallas and Laura Jockusch’s contribu-
tion, “Anything But Silent: Jewish Responses to the Holocaust in the Aftermath of
World War II” (Chapter 17), amply demonstrates that as soon as the war was over (and
in some cases before it), Jewish and non-Jewish historical commissions and international
relief agencies investigated the wartime experiences of survivors. These efforts included
David Boder’s testimony project of 1946 and the formation of humanitarian tracing
services such as the (eventually named) International Tracing Service (ITS). Early
remembrances of the Holocaust occurred at local levels in Jewish communities in cities
and regional centers in France, Germany, Hungary, and Poland, where some Jews had
remained and others returned. Gallas and Jockusch explore the factors that shaped the
enduring “myth of silence” and the contexts that contributed to its undoing.

**Theme 4: Local, Mobile, and Transnational Holocausts** contains seven chapters
that examine the forced movement and confinement of populations across and from
Europe and the different ideologies and structures that enabled mass displacement and
confinement. Tim Cole’s framing chapter, “Geographies of the Holocaust” (Chapter 18)
introduces readers to the spatial turn in Holocaust studies. He charts the term’s origin
and influence across geography, philosophy, and history and its recent scholarly practice
in relation to mapping different scales of the Holocaust’s perpetration and impact
through interdisciplinary collaborative projects and scholarship (Geographies of the
Holocaust), and individual contributions (Hilberg, Charlesworth, Gigliotti, and
Agamben, among others). As Cole notes, “geographies of the Holocaust are only in the
very early states of thinking through what the implications of taking scale seriously
might mean for scholars of genocide.” The chapters under this theme demonstrate the
possibilities of thinking with geography and spatial attributes (scale, distance, proxim-
ity) when writing about forced displacement and family separations through residence
changes, visa chasing, forced labor, and extraction from local communities. Though
they do not always explicitly practise Cole’s call to insert scale, they do showcase the
multitude of political routes to spatial marginalization through studies of humanitarian
agencies, diplomats, and the willing participation and complicity of local leaders and
neutral states.
In “The Global ‘Final Solution’ and Nazi Imperialism” (Chapter 19), Gerhard L. Weinberg reminds us that first and foremost, Hitler was a “politician of space,” an aspiring globalist whose method of land acquisition depended on the intentional destruction of peoples, with Jews prioritized. That vigorous pursuit was stifled only by resources, the Allies, and occasional backlashes to his Social Darwinist vision of the future. Weinberg’s chapter outlines the local and regional pathways to achieving this global solution through the elimination of the Jews and the disabled. The economic and psychological disorder of Germany’s defeat in World War I indeed propelled a new ethno-spatial future that was predicated on the targeting of Jews’ physical presence in Europe, and their own territorial ambitions of a future Zionist state in Palestine. This dovetailing of territorial expansion and the spatial containment of Jews reasserts the importance of the “intentionalist” school of thought on the decision-making chronology of genocide of the Jews but also gives it a defined geographical zone and spatial ideology. Weinberg’s “perpetrator”-centered approach also highlights the complex and causal synergies between genocide in the Soviet Union, the evolving attack on the disabled through the “Euthanasia” program, the fate of Jews in ghettos, and their impending deportations to the “east.”

The expanding zones of genocide in the Soviet Union, Germany, and occupied Poland add a spatial frame to understanding how Hitler’s vision for acquisition of territories was populated and depopulated throughout the course of aggressive war and occupation policies. Indeed, these zones of deportation and destruction were dependent on an energised decentralized bureaucracy, ideologically committed Nazis, non-Jewish communities and individual opportunists. Weinberg concludes that Hitler remained committed, if not more emboldened, to the idea of a “global Holocaust project” through, for example, the Nazi regime’s diversion of resources to the round of up Jews from Greek Islands in the Aegean Sea to Auschwitz. It was this same year, in January 1944, when the United States finally passed legislation to establish the War Refugee Board, which was most effective, if not marginally so, in identifying Jews for rescue in the Balkans region.

The spatialities and routes to rescue, and indeed their lived geographies, are examined in Susanne Heim’s contribution, “Refugees’ Routes: Emigration, Resettlement, and Transmigration” (Chapter 20). Heim examines the evolution of the policy of forced migration and the attitudes and immigration policies from countries around the world where Jewish refugees sought asylum from 1933 up until the outbreak of World War II. As with other chapters in this section, she questions one-dimensional characterizations of “the refugee” and invests in them an embodied agency. The chapter complements recent research in displacement studies that examines the forty years’ crisis of refugees and Jewish refugee movements within that period. The chapters in this section call for renewed attention to constructions and experiences of Jewish refugee-hood before, during, and after the Nazi period in ethno-nation building projects across Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia and the Soviet Union.

David A. Messenger’s chapter, “The Geopolitics of Neutrality: Diplomacy, Refuge, and Rescue during the Holocaust” (Chapter 21) explores how increasingly ambiguous policies with respect to local, refugee, and transiting Jews were cast aside to further nationalist interests across the neutral countries of Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey in response to the Nazi regime and the expansion of their bio-racial project. Messenger highlights how the actions of diplomats to secure transit visas or facilitate
escape routes clashed with embassies with pro-Nazi loyalties. The image of “the refugee” that emerges, then, is one that requires unpacking based on route, location, and in-flight enablement through diplomats, relief officials, and local communities, depending on the trajectory, country of origin, and transmigration. Messenger’s attention to Spain’s attitude toward the fate of Nazi-era Jewish refugees is the main topic in Alejandro Baer’s and Pedro Correa’s chapter, “Spain and the Holocaust: Contested Past, Contested Present” (Chapter 22). Baer and Correa argue that a multisited and multisourced analysis of refugees and displacement is much overdue, one where historical practices of mass expulsion and violence are foregrounded: from the fifteenth-century expulsion of Jews from Spain, to the Spanish Civil War from 1936 to 1939, and through to the era of World War II, and that of the Francoist dictatorship (1939–75). Their systematic analysis of the transmigration and repatriation of different groups of resident and refugee Jews across Spain, France and Greece calls attention to the limited relevance of the term “Holocaust” to explain the dispersion and home-seeking of vulnerable groups. Furthermore, they examine the limited, if not politically selective, uses of these pasts (the exile of the Sepharad, Franco, and the Nazi era) in Spain’s transition to democracy in the mid-1970s. The slow and traumatic emergence of platforms to enable discussion of the Holocaust in Spain included the broadcast of the NBC series, Holocaust, in Spain, in 1979, and at national level, Spain’s admission to the European Union, the opening of diplomatic relations with Israel, and the establishment of tribunals prosecuting crimes against humanity in Latin American countries.

Arab responses to the Nazi regime are explored in Esther Webman’s chapter, “Contesting the ‘Zionist’” Narrative: Arab Responses to the Holocaust” (Chapter 23). A pioneer in assessing how countries across the Arab world courted Hitler, Webman highlights changes and continuities in Arab attitudes and in academic research since the emergence of an Arab-Holocaust historiography in relation to Holocaust denial, Jewish-Muslim relations, and instances of Muslims rescuing Jews. Webman’s chapter is an intricate study of a landscape often disconnected from the continental historiography. So, too, is Aomar Boum’s contribution, “Redrawing Holocaust Geographies: A Cartography of Vichy and Nazi Reach into North Africa” (Chapter 24). Opening the study with a discussion of the USHMM-sponsored traveling exhibition, “State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda” and its impact on students and protesters in Tunis in December 2017, Boum explores what might be called the “colonial cartographic” in Holocaust studies, namely the fate of North African Jews under Vichy, Nazi, and Fascist rule over Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, and Libya. His anthropological approach to analyzing the evolution of nineteenth and twentieth-century contours of Arab, Jewish, and Muslim identity in law, residential communities, and scholarship reveals deep complexities along social, economic, and political lines. Vichy reach into Morocco, for example, was mostly confined to Jewish quarters (mellah), and some Muslim and Jewish leaders forged alliances to minimize the impact of antisemitic laws and prejudices from spreading. Given that much research on and about “Holocaust geographies” has, to date, focused on European cartographies, routes and movements, Boum’s chapter expands the reach of this phrase to North Africa. Theme 4’s emphases on Nazi imperial ambitions, flight, and diplomacy, escape routes, mobilities, long-term historical displacements, interethnic relations between Jews, Muslims, and Christians, and the search for asylum, situates it at the forefront of Holocaust geographies’ research, expanding its cartography from Europe to the Arab world, North Africa, and the Middle East.
Theme 5: Witnessing in Dialogue: Testifiers, Readers, and Viewers pluralizes what Annette Wieviorka has called the “era of the witness.” Its six chapters renew attention to key theoretical interventions, in relation to memory, judgment, and the disruptions posed by digital culture and virtual realities. If Marianne Hirsch’s somewhat limiting notion of “postmemory” and Michael Rothberg’s catch-all “multidirectional memory” are now mainstays of theoretical inquiry, what is the future of the witness as testifier and emissary? Alan Rosen’s framing chapter, “The Holocaust Witness: Wartime and Postwar Voices” (Chapter 25), considers the religious backgrounds, ages, and documentary imperative that motivated early recollections, and the fluid genres of their telling.

Monika J. Flaschka’s chapter “Sexual Violence: Recovering a Suppressed History” (Chapter 26) builds on Spurlin’s chapter from Theme 1 to forge new pathways to study homosexuality, sexual violence, and the segregation of women’s history from Holocaust studies. Flaschka calls attention not only to these omissions, but also to the scholars who uphold male privilege in the event’s narration: “Even now, analyses of the experiences of women are labeled as such – women and the Holocaust – whereas studies of non-female specific experiences are just called Holocaust history.” She also outlines the broad challenges within the field in relation to testimonial availability, the vocabulary of violence, and definitional boundaries.

The enduringly fluid concept of the “Grey Zone” is revisited in Jonathan Druker’s chapter, “Ethical Grey Zones: On Coercion and Complicity in the Concentration Camp and Beyond” (Chapter 27). Druker advances Levi as an important theorist of the Holocaust. He examines the implications of the “grey zone’s” migration to describe the motivations of voluntary perpetrators and coerced victims. He does so by offering a situated analysis of the concept and its appearance across many domains of Holocaust research.

The image archive of the Holocaust is the subject of Carol Zemel’s “Holocaust Photography and the Challenge of the Visual” (Chapter 28). Paying attention to the evolution of atrocity photography since the 1930s, Zemel explores the debates that have accompanied its viewing in different countries and the emergence of the viewer as an implicated and contingent witness to a complex history of violence and dehumanization. What was the role of photography in guiding the visualization of atrocity during the Holocaust and at liberation, with its emphasis on the forensics of killing with camps, barbed wire, and unidentified, androgynous survivors? Analyses of photographers, visual criticism, and photography’s ability to compel, fascinate, and mobilize an ethical response are insightfully explored themes, and the chapter concludes with a sustained engagement of Sonderkommando photographs from Auschwitz.

Anxieties about the “passing” of the survivor generation are eloquently explored in, Nicholas Chare’s “Holocaust Memory in a Post-Survivor World: Bearing Lasting Witness” (Chapter 29). Chare explores the poetics of storytelling in philosophical, visual, and intergenerational efforts to bear witness. Examining a range of texts from Georges Didi-Huberman, Marianne Hirsch, Anne Karpf, and Jean-François Lyotard, he charts what might be termed “intertextual generative memory.” This phrase points to the productive confluence of literature, photography, philosophy, and memorial visits in situ to empower meaningful connections, however minor and particular, in current and future custodians of Holocaust memory.

Noah Shenker’s chapter, “Postmemory: Digital Testimony and the Future of Witnessing” (Chapter 30), continues Chare’s exploration of testimonial inheritance.
It takes readers into the world of digital memory via the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive (VHA). Shenker asks readers to rethink received testimony as unmediated and to consider the contexts that produce the “testimony”: its infrastructure (the institutional setting), its interiors (houses, rooms, and partnerships in telling between interviewer and survivor) and finally, its accessibility and disembodied format (the digital segments). Shenker’s suggestion that readers develop “testimonial literacy,” a holistic appreciation for sound and sensibility, is explored with the provision of insights from noted scholars of memory and ways to think “through” technological and mediated stages of testimony giving and listening.

**Theme 6: Human Rights and Visual Culture: Pivots and Disruptions** consists of six chapters that explore the comparative impacts of human rights histories in indigenous histories of genocide, museum education, social media, the photography of mass violence, and film. This theme is framed with Valerie Hébert’s “The Problem of Human Rights after the Holocaust” (Chapter 31). Hébert examines the extent to which the genealogy of human rights philosophy and activism was accelerated by the revelations of Nazi atrocity as what is broadly taken, at least in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, as humanity’s most extreme or complete human rights violation. She charts competing claims and philosophical debates concerning empathy, solidarity, and activism, and the positive and negative influences of Holocaust and genocide photography in activating the western concept of a “common humanity” to the disregard of European-inspired colonial violations, ongoing genocide, and minority persecution. The chapter also relates to recent studies of human rights activism and its Jewish history, such as that chronicled by Philippe Sands in *East West Street: On the Origins of “Genocide” and “Crimes Against Humanity”* and in Mark Loeffler’s *Rooted Cosmopolitans: Jews and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century.*

Colonial genocide is the focus of David B. MacDonald’s “Indigenous Genocide and Perceptions of the Holocaust in Canada” (Chapter 32). MacDonald examines how genocide in Canada from the mid-nineteenth to late twentieth century in the Indian Residential School system has been connected to the “Americanization of the Holocaust” during the 1990s and examines its impact on discussions of comparative victimhood, reparations claims and the outcomes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2009–15). He argues that the emphasis on the Holocaust in these debates diverted public empathy for generations of genocide victims in Canada. Finally, MacDonald charts the evolution of the discourse of colonial genocide and state responsibility and also assesses Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s commitment to decolonization through indigenous recognition, inclusion, and partnership.

The pedagogic complexities that have accompanied the incredible expansion of formal and informal education programs at Holocaust museums around the world is the focus of Avril Alba’s chapter, “Lessons from History? The Future of Holocaust Education” (Chapter 33). Alba situates museums, their educational directors, and outreach coordinators as leaders in learning outside the classroom, often designing curricula and modules that adhere to national standards of coverage and also customize content according to the age, ethnicity, and backgrounds of students. She focuses on educational programs at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, DC, and the South African Holocaust and Genocide Foundation’s centers in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban. In