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Dora's World, Our World: Essentialism and Ethnic Hatred

by G. Scott Waterman

“My mother hated the Russians.” It was probably sometime in the mid-1980s when I first heard my mother-in-law describe her mother’s attitude toward the non-Jewish neighbors of her childhood village in central Ukraine. The antecedents of such sentiments are well known to those familiar with the history of

eastern European Jewry. Similarly easy to understand is the likely error of Dora’s identification of the ethnicity of her family’s tormentors. She was only about nine years old when they immigrated to the United States in 1911. Her world had been a small Yiddish-speaking *shtetl* deep inside the vast tsarist empire. Those from outside her community were the *goyim*. Us and them. They clearly loathed us, and the feelings were mutual. At least that’s how I imagine it to have been for this person I never met.

This essay brings together family stories with historical events, philosophical formulations, social science findings, and personal recollections. Its aim is to suggest a particular conceptual scheme for application to the perennial problem of ethnic hatred and the violence it engenders. It makes no pretense to explanatory completeness. Efforts at grasping phenomena as complex and heterogeneous as those under discussion rarely yield to monocausal hypotheses. On the other hand, readers who recognize a potentially limiting Eurocentrism can be assured that it is reflective only of my own area of (limited) expertise. As even cursory familiarity with, for example, the 1994 genocidal violence perpetrated by Hutus against Tutsis in Rwanda or the ongoing brutalization of the Uyghur mi-



Treblinka, Poland. Photograph by Sandra Steingard, October 1987.

Courtesy of the photographer

nority by the Han Chinese majority—not to mention the injustices and violence against Americans of African origin that continue to characterize our own society—shows that such animosity and barbarity are not limited to any one continent or region.

The Pale of Settlement—the strip of territory comprising the western border-

lands of the Russian Empire on which Jews were allowed to settle between the late eighteenth century and the Bolshevik Revolution—included very little of Great Russia. It thus always struck me as unlikely that the people my wife’s maternal grandmother reportedly referred to as “Russians” would have considered themselves such. For obvious reasons, I have been thinking more about Dora’s early life lately. How did her non-Jewish neighbors conceive of themselves? What language(s) did they speak? Did they distinguish their ethnicity from their citizenship in a dynastic realm? Did they consider themselves members of a captive nation? Above all, did they share with Dora a hatred of “the Russians”? Whatever the answers to those questions might be, their descendants are, at the time of this writing, mounting a valiant defense of their homeland and recently gained sovereignty against a numerically superior enemy whose autocratic leader seems determined to reconstitute the empire into which Dora was born, if not welcomed.

In his masterful volume, *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe*, historian John Connelly explicates the foundations of ethnic rivalries, insecurities, and hatreds in that part of the world (largely west of the former Soviet republics).¹

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I recommend it strongly. But as important as it is to grasp the historical contingencies and fixed geographic realities that have made eastern Europe the site of so much rancor and bloodshed over the centuries, it is equally vital to acknowledge the more general human proclivities expressed through the particularities of that history and geography. Among the tools I (and others) have found useful in describing those human predilections is the philosophical concept of *essentialism*. Platonic idealism, and the Aristotelian metaphysics that followed it, entail the belief that everything is what it is as a reflection of its “essence”—its underlying, fundamental nature. Adherence to that doctrine is, as I will demonstrate, hardly confined to classical Greek antiquity or to academic philosophy.

The example most commonly employed to illustrate essentialism comes from chemistry. As you will (I hope) recall from high school, the placement of each element on the periodic table is determined by its atomic number. Thus, for instance, any atom that has twelve protons in its nucleus is magnesium. Any atom that has a different number of protons in its nucleus is not magnesium. One can thus say with justification that the essence of an atom being a magnesium atom is the presence of precisely twelve protons in its nucleus. A related (though not synonymous) concept is that of “natural kinds.” A magnesium atom was a magnesium atom, and behaved as one, long before the element was named and very long before the Russian chemist Dmitri Mendeleev formulated the periodic table. This is not to deny that human interests are deeply involved in describing, understanding, and using chemistry. It is, rather, to say that some categories are more accurately conceived as discovered than as invented.

In my discipline of philosophy of psychiatry, controversies regarding diagnostic categories typically turn on essentialist (mis)conceptions. If you have ever heard assertions along the lines of, “Alcoholism is a *real* disease” or “Donald Trump isn’t a *true* sociopath,” you have witnessed essentialism at work. The assumption that constructs like “disease” and “sociopath” possess essences, or are best thought of as natural kinds with definitions and boundaries set by nature rather than by people (i.e., are more like “magnesium atom” than like “NATO”), is usually unacknowledged but is nevertheless crucial to understanding the arguments it underlies. Psychologist Peter Zachar, in his book, *A Metaphysics of Psychopathology*, summarizes empiric studies of children that suggest the early development of a bias toward essentialist thinking.² Whether or not that is the case, it seems undeniable that imputing unwarranted levels of concreteness and explanatory value to a broad variety of categories is a widespread characteristic of people.

Among those categories are race and ethnicity. Essentialization of race, as with the concept of race itself, is a modern phenomenon. The development of the discipline of anthropology was fueled by early modern European expansion. By the late eighteenth century, as historian George Mosse points out, interest in racial classification was becoming increasingly judgmental and essentialized.³ And as the violent twentieth century dawned, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the Englishman-turned-German, was advancing the idea that Jews posed a threat to German civilization—the pinnacle of human achievement in Chamberlain’s hierarchical taxonomy. Although Jew-hatred was already an an-

cient ideology, its modern iteration—solidifying through at least the first half of the twentieth century—conceived of Jewishness as fixed and immutable. That is, being a Jew was held to be reflective of an underlying essence to which the various attributes purportedly shared by all members of that category are causally linked.

The importance of racial or ethnic essentialism extends well beyond the history of antisemitism, Nazism, and the Holocaust. The identification of national political entities with particular ethnicities is a relatively recent innovation that can be viewed as both a consequence of and an impetus to increasing ethnic essentialization. In his classic study, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, political scientist Benedict Anderson notes that pre-modern polities were defined not by their subjects but by their dynastic rulers. They generally had indistinct borders and ethnically/linguistically heterogeneous populations.⁴ The dissolution of multi-ethnic contiguous empires in Europe following the First World War is generally (and understandably) cast in democratizing/liberalizing terms: Wilsonian “self-determination” (for Europeans, anyway). But the bloody dismemberment into its ethnic components of the Yugoslav state, established in the post-World War I settlement that dismantled the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, laid bare the dark side of essentialized ethno-nationalism. The current war in Ukraine—whose instigation by the Russian president reflects his geopolitical anxieties over his large Slavic neighbor’s western orientation—likewise should draw our attention to the consequences of essentialization of ethnicity. Indeed, sociologist Rowan Savage argues that the modern “conception of the bounded and ethnically homogeneous nation-state” is a necessary precondition for the emergence of genocidal regimes.⁵ Paradoxically, Putin’s essentialized conviction that Russians and Ukrainians are “one people,” which is among his stated motivations for waging his current war of conquest, is not mitigating the lethality of the aggression he is directing against his Ukrainian siblings.

The tsarist empire of my wife’s grandmother’s early childhood has been gone for over a century, though I have first-hand knowledge of its Soviet incarnation—more expansive even than its dynastic predecessor if one includes the European client states that buffered its western border. During the fall of 1987, after touring portions of the Soviet Union, my wife and I took a long train ride from Leningrad to Warsaw, traversing the northern sections of the territory historian Timothy Snyder has evocatively dubbed the “Bloodlands.”⁶ One morning in the capital of a state whose unenviable geographic position between Germanic and Slavic peoples led to its erasure from the political map of Europe for well over a century, we noticed a middle-aged man in the lobby of our run-down hotel who seemed to be eyeing us. As we walked past him he furtively took us aside and asked (in English) if we were interested in hiring a private tour guide—illegal in Communist Poland, of course. We told him of our desire to visit the site of the Treblinka extermination center and he agreed to drive us there—after a stop at the only bank in Warsaw that exchanged traveler’s checks for US currency. Zbigniew, a doctoral-level economist who had lost his government job as a consequence of his deviationist views, was a font of inside knowledge of Polish history, politics, society, and economy, which he dispensed authoritatively as his aging yellow Fiat sputtered through the Polish

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countryside, providing us infinitely greater comfort than was afforded the approximately 925,000 Jews—and unknown numbers of Roma, Poles, and Soviet POWs—transported by rail to Treblinka and their deaths.⁷ The anecdote that has most vividly stayed with me all these years was his description of a conversation he had recently had with a young person in Łódź, home to more than 200,000 Jews before World War II. Zbigniew was incredulous at the fact that his interlocutor had never met a Jew. “In Łódź!” he repeated for emphasis.

As those readers who have visited Treblinka will attest, no structures were left standing by the Germans, who dismantled the camp after its murderous mission was completed. One therefore needs to imagine the scene as it was when transports were arriving between summer 1942 and fall 1943: not only the gas chambers and other buildings but the chaos, the noise, the confusion, the terror...and the palpable ethnic hatred driving it all.

The stone monument in the foreground of the photo, taken by my wife, reads “Never Again” in Polish, Yiddish, Russian, English, French, and German. Left unspecified is just what it is that is to be avoided in the future: “Never again” ... what? If the message is that never again will racial and ethnic enmity drive human cruelty, then clearly it has failed, both as a prediction and as a plea. But if essentialist formulations as applied to race and ethnicity are relatively new, then perhaps they can be undone. They are, after all, misconceptions, albeit powerful ones, ready at hand for despots and demagogues to employ for their own heinous purposes.

Young Dora apparently didn't distinguish Ukrainians

from Russians. And if, however they defined themselves, they had not seen her as merely an instance of a reviled ethnic category, she might not have hated them.

Citations

¹ John Connelly, *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020).

² Peter Zachar, *A Metaphysics of Psychopathology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014).

³ George L. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1978).

⁴ Benedict Richard O’Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991).

⁵ Rowan Savage, “‘Disease Incarnate’: Biopolitical Discourse and Genocidal Dehumanisation in the Age of Modernity,” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 20, no. 3 (September 2007): 404.

⁶ Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

⁷ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Treblinka,” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, last modified March 3, 2021, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/treblinka>.

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Dora and Harry Lenow, Twenty-fifth Wedding Anniversary. Photographer unknown, c. 1952. Used with permission of Scott Waterman.

Research Report: The Case of Georg Elser

by Alan E. Steinweis

The subject of my new book project is a failed assassination attempt against Adolf Hitler in November 1939. The would-be assassin was Georg Elser, a cabinetmaker by occupation, and a leftist who was not affiliated with the organized Communist or Socialist resistance. Elser constructed a time bomb and planted it inside a column in a Munich beer hall where Hitler had been scheduled to speak. The bomb exploded as planned, killing seven people, but Hitler had stepped down from the speaker's podium and departed from the beer hall thirteen minutes ahead of schedule. Elser was captured while attempting to flee to Switzerland. Although he confessed to the act, Nazi propagandists blamed the explosion on a conspiracy between the British secret service, anti-Hitler German émigrés, and Jews. Hoping to use Elser in a show-trial, the regime incarcerated him in prisons and concentration camps during World War II, but ordered him executed in 1945.

My book will narrate the fascinating story of Elser's political courage and technical ingenuity, but its focus will be on the post-1945 afterlife of the event. It would be decades before Elser came to be recognized in Germany as a legitimate figure of anti-Nazi resistance. For many years it was widely believed that Elser had worked for the secret police and that the assassination attempt had been staged by the Nazi government as a justification for intensified domestic repression. The most prominent proponent of this theory was Martin Niemöller, the celebrated anti-Nazi protestant pastor who eventually became president of the World Council of Churches. Niemöller's theory was definitively repudiated in 1969 when historians unearthed the record of Elser's 1939 interrogation by the Gestapo. The document proved that Elser had acted alone and had been motivated by opposition to the Nazi regime's crushing of the German labor movement, the Nazification of the protestant churches, and Hitler's expansionist foreign policy.

Despite the emergence of this incontrovertible evidence of Elser's motivation and lone responsibility for the act, the reluctance to honor Elser as a resistance figure persisted in both West and East Germany. The culture of historical memory in West Germany celebrated the failed assassination attempt against Hitler that a conspiracy of military officers and other elites had carried out on July 20, 1944. At the same time, Elser's act challenged the dominant self-exculpatory discourse about the Nazi past, according to which ordinary Germans had possessed no meaningful ways to oppose an oppressive regime. In East Germany, the Communist regime prescribed an official historical narrative in which anti-Nazi resistance between 1933 and 1945 had been concentrated in the outlawed German Communist Party. Although Elser's political sympathies had lain on the left, he was not doctrinaire, nor had he been a party member. The disinclination to honor Elser as a resistance figure thus grew out of the dominant his-

torical discourses in both halves of divided Germany during the Cold War.

This situation began to change in 1989. That year marked the end of the Cold War, and also saw the premiere of a dramatic film about Elser, produced and directed by the prominent Austrian actor Klaus Maria Brandauer, who also played Elser in the film. During the 1990s, recognitions of Elser emerged in the form of local memorials and street-namings. These became increasingly common in connection with the sixtieth anniversary of Elser's act in 1999. In subsequent years, references to Elser were made ever more frequently in commemorations of the anti-Nazi resistance held annually on July 20. It would be fair to say that Elser is today widely recognized in Germany as an important resistance figure.

The broad embrace of Elser has, however, generated its own backlash in Germany. Critics of Elser have questioned the wisdom of celebrating a citizen who attempted to kill the nation's leader during wartime. They point out that the genocidal projects of the Nazi regime had not yet begun when Elser tried to kill Hitler in November 1939, thus the unique evil of Nazism had not yet mani-

fested itself, as it had by the time of the July 1944 assassination attempt. Many historians, journalists, and intellectuals in Germany have rejected this argument as an apologetic narrative linked to emergent right-wing, nationalist discourses.

The widespread celebration of Elser has also assumed historically problematic forms. For example, a feature film released in 2015 suggested that Elser's motives for killing Hitler had included outrage at the Nazi treatment of Jews. While this possibility cannot be entirely ruled out, there is no concrete evidence for it. This example underscores the extent to which narratives about the Nazi period of German history have become inextricably linked with the persecution of the Jews—so much so that a movie director felt pressure to fabricate evidence for Elser's anti-Semitism.

The Elser story appears briefly—usually as only a few sentences or a paragraph—in many books on Nazi Germany and Hitler, but there is only one scholarly analysis of the topic (Peter Steinbach and Johannes Tuchel, *Georg Elser: Der Hitler-Attentäter*, Berlin, 2010.) This work focuses mainly on Elser's biography and on the actual assassination attempt, offering little on post-1945 developments. My book will recount Elser's personal story and the attempt on Hitler's life, but will concentrate primarily on the long struggle for recognition after 1945. It will use the Elser case as a lens through which German discourses about the Nazi past can be analyzed.



Georg Elser.

Photo credit:

Georg-Elser-Arbeitskreis

Alan E. Steinweis is Professor of History and Raul Hilberg Distinguished Professor of Holocaust Studies at the University of Vermont.

Peter Hayes Visits the University of Vermont

By James Hughes and Patrick Sullivan



Peter Hayes

On Wednesday, April 20, 2022, Professor Peter Hayes spoke at the UVM Alumni House's Silver Pavilion as the speaker at the Miller Center's annual Holocaust Commemoration Lecture. Hayes is Professor Emeritus of History and German and the Theodore Zev Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation Professor of Holocaust Studies Emeritus at Northwestern University. His research has focused on the history of Nazi

Germany, the Holocaust, and large corporations during the Third Reich. He has authored or edited thirteen books, among them: *Industry and Ideology: IG Farben in the Nazi Era* (New York, 1987, 2001), *From Cooperation to Complicity: Degussa in the Third Reich* (New York, 2004), and *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (Oxford, 2012), co-edited with John K. Roth. Hayes has worked with numerous professional organizations, including the Academic Committee of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, the American Council for International Education, and has had a leading role in the work of the Holocaust Educational Foundation.

The lecture, "Why? Explaining the Holocaust" shared the title of his acclaimed 2017 book, *Why? Explaining the Holocaust*, in which he methodically deconstructs conventional explanations of the Holocaust. In his lecture, Hayes made the compelling argument that the Shoah arose from a mixture of disparate forces, motivations, and historical understandings that coalesced to provide the foundations on which the Nazis and their accomplices carried out the destruction of Europe's Jews. For example, he identified key elements of Europe's treatment of its Jewish population in order to address the question: "Why Annihilation?" and then proceeded to illustrate the historical conditions and factors leading to 1941. While the Nazis attempted to expel as many Jews as possible, they simultaneously conquered areas which brought more Jews into their orbit. Exterminatory slave labor and outright murder became easier and more profitable than emigration by late 1941, when the Nazis knew that they had nothing to lose domestically or on the international stage.

In explaining the complexities of the destruction process, Hayes was able to draw a clear and accessible picture for his audience. For example, he explained how the killing centers of

"Operation Reinhard" were inexpensively built using existing structures and easily accessible materials that today one can find at home improvement stores like Home Depot. Addressing the question of why the Allies did not provide assistance while the Jews were being annihilated, Hayes cited the early stirrings of the Cold War: attempting to save the Jews was considered outside the interests of the Western powers in the context of an emerging political framework that would pit the West and the East against one other.

In addition to his Holocaust Commemoration Lecture, Hayes met with students in Jonathan Huener's course History 190/"The Holocaust." His presentation in that class, titled "Makeshift Murder: The Holocaust at its Peak," was a response to the common metaphor of the Shoah as industrialized death. While this description sheds light on the mass murder that took place, Hayes explained, it also obscures the disorganized manner of the majority of killings. Illustrating this reality, Hayes described camps where the Nazis and their collaborators used scavenged materials from surrounding towns to build improvised extermination facilities. Other evidence, such as the placement of gas chambers near railroad tracks in view of new arrivals at the Belzec killing center, further demonstrated Hayes' view that the Holocaust was effective, but not necessarily efficient, at destroying human life. His talk, an effective counterpoint to the "industrial" metaphor and its implied characterization of order, highlighted the many haphazard elements of the Shoah.

After the lecture, Hayes took students' questions regarding a wide range of topics related to the Holocaust and Nazi Germany, such as differences between the various extermination camps, the development of historical myths about the Holocaust, Nazi plunder, and personal experiences that led him to his chosen field of study.

These two events were not only scholarly, but also understandable. Hayes is one of those few historians able to write a history anyone can read, and he also has the ability to give a rich and textured lecture without the use of notes. It is clear why he is such an admired and valued historian in his field, for not only does he exhibit a craftsman-like mastery of the subject, but he also retains the ability to reinforce these complex ideas and concepts with clear imagery and content.

Patrick Sullivan and James Hughes are first-year graduate students in the Master of Arts Program in History at the University of Vermont.

Book Review

Edward Westermann, *Hitler's Ostkrieg and the Indian Wars: Comparing Genocide and the Holocaust*. 322 pp. University of Oklahoma Press, 2016.

Edward Westermann, *Drunk on Genocide: Alcohol and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany*. 294 pp. Cornell University Press, 2021.

By Nathan Gondelman

Recent scholarship on the Holocaust has become increasingly diverse and innovative in an effort to better understand every dimension and thread connected to the systematic extermination of European Jews during the World War II. Though it occurred within such a relatively condensed period, the scope of the genocide, the ideological predicate that catalyzed it, and its place as part of the most destructive war in world history make the Holocaust a subject distinctively rich for exploration from any number of different angles and perspectives.

Two recent books from Edward Westermann, Professor of History at Texas A&M University and Commissioner on the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission, demonstrate the degree to which the Holocaust continues to offer opportunities for unique and inventive scholarly treatments. In *Hitler's Ostkrieg and the Indian Wars: Comparing Genocide and Conquest*, Westermann examines the similarities and differences between the German conquest and occupation of Poland and the Soviet Union and the wars between the United States and Native Americans in the American West in the second half of the nineteenth century. Then, in his monograph, *Drunk on Genocide: Alcohol and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany*, Westermann offers a fresh perspective on the relationship between alcohol, intoxication, and the Holocaust. While both works address the Holocaust, they are reflective of the latitude scholars now have to examine the subject through dramatically different approaches, and each book offers valuable and thoughtful insights for those readers who already have a strong foundational familiarity with the Holocaust.

Perhaps the most interesting issue associated with *Hitler's Ostkrieg and the Indian Wars* is Westermann's purpose in writing it. Comparative histories involving the Holocaust are not especially common and could be construed as potentially controversial. However, this moment is an opportune time to engage in a comparative study between the Holocaust and one of the most ignominious and discomfiting aspects of American history. It is not that critical reassessments of America's past are particularly new by any means, but it appears that honest reappraisals of certain aspects of US history—perhaps most acutely with its relationship to and treatment of people of color—are becoming increasingly mainstream. That such a historiographical trend is at least perceived as a reality is corroborated by the way in which American history is taught has become a political wedge issue in the United States in recent years.

But this development in and of itself does not explain why Westermann, a European historian by training, determined that comparing German policy in Eastern Europe and US policy in the American West was a useful and instructive exercise. Rather, Westermann asserts that such a juxtaposition helps to clarify the actions and intent of the political, racial, economic, governmental, and military char-

acteristics of each “national project,” revealing similarities and differences in a way that might not be as manifestly apparent when studying either process in isolation.

One of the thornier aspects of Westermann's comparative method is the nuance required to illuminate the dissimilarities between German and American policy in each respective theater without giving readers the impression that any type of value judgement is being made as to one being “worse” than the other. This is perhaps especially treacherous given that Westermann's expertise is concentrated on the Holocaust, although he did undertake his own research of the historiography of the American West and consulted with historians who are experts on the Indian Wars for this work. Westermann skillfully avoids this trap by outright acknowledging his intent to avoid it. But he also does so by diligently proffering a wealth of diverse historical evidence to support his more sweeping comparative assessments with respect to the concepts of Manifest Destiny and *Lebensraum*, the desired endgames of the American and German governments in each region, the ways in which each military conflict was prosecuted, and how civilians and insurgencies were handled by each respective state.

Each chapter first covers the American West, followed by a subsequent accounting of the corresponding German policy in the “wild East.” For well-read students of the Holocaust, there is likely little new information to be gleaned from Westermann's account of the German policies in Poland and the Soviet Union; it is really the juxtaposition with a thematic corollary in the American West—and the perhaps lesser-known specifics of the Indian wars—that offers the reader a new lens through which to consider each conflict. What makes this work especially thoughtful is that the distinctions put forth are nuanced and not presented in a binary or heavy-handed fashion. For example, while Westermann makes clear that the aim of the United States government was not the physical extermination of the Native American population—in contrast to the German policy toward the Jews—he does offer numerous examples of exterminatory rhetoric from contemporary American press outlets located near the frontier. Outside of an academic environment, these facts could be used to draw a superficial and reductive equivalency between the German and US contexts, but Westermann is able to portray this comparison in a more layered manner that simultaneously captures both similarities and divergences.

Ultimately, Westermann recognizes the singular nature of the Holocaust but also identifies key parallels between it and the Indian Wars. The United States and the Third Reich both engaged in massacres, atrocities, and military conflicts that spelled disaster for Native Americans and Eastern Europeans—and particularly Jews—as

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part of a geopolitical expansionist endeavor. Westermann sees the US process of Manifest Destiny as primarily economic in motivation, while the economic impulse was just one facet of Germany's broader ideological inspiration for its pursuit of *Lebensraum*. US expansion in the West was much more gradual and decentralized, and there was often disharmony between the American government's preferred strategy and the typically more confrontational actions of individual citizens on the frontier with Native Americans. In fact, the presence of the US military was ostensibly to help to ensure at least a somewhat reciprocal pacification of relations between Native Americans and US settlers—a role that would have been inconceivable for the Wehrmacht in the East because of the way in which German policy was unequivocally driven by a centralized ideology that precluded any such prospect.

Massacres and atrocities were conducted systematically and purposefully by the Germans with relentless frequency, but Westermann claims that part of the reason that massacres like Sand Creek and Wounded Knee loom large in American history is because they were relatively aberrational. This is not meant to be reflective in any way of the relative morality of either side, but rather that the German perception of the Jews was that of a pathogen infecting the body politic, necessitating annihilation and disqualifying coexistence. For the US, Native Americans could be removed and isolated on reservations to facilitate geographic and economic expansion, but their cultural death through coerced assimilation and Christianization could allow for their continued biological existence and eventual absorption into the larger American project. Such resolution was not available to the majority of the population in German-occupied Poland and the Soviet Union.

Drunk on Genocide takes a more traditional, monographic approach to the study of the Holocaust. Unlike *Hitler's Ostkrieg and the Indian Wars*, those familiar with Holocaust literature will likely find plenty of new information and insights in Westermann's more recent book. As in *Hitler's Ostkrieg*, Westermann deploys a thematic approach that does not make any effort to adhere to a specific chronology. *Drunk on Genocide* is also more detached than *Hitler's Ostkrieg* from the upper levels of the Reich government. While there is the occasional reference to Hitler and Himmler, the role of state policy is not as central to *Drunk on Genocide* as are the accounts of individual SS, Wehrmacht, or auxiliary perpetrators and Jewish victims who are not recognizably known in historical memory. Additionally, in *Drunk on Genocide*, there is a degree of overlap between history and behavioral and social psychology—always useful elements of Holocaust studies that help us better understand the motivations and actions of victims, bystanders, and perpetrators.

Westermann goes to great lengths to emphasize the cultural importance of alcohol in Nazi Germany—something that he concedes transcended German borders—and the way in which it dovetailed with the constructs of masculinity and “hardness.” The ability to consume enormous quantities of alcohol but not have it perceptibly alter one's behavior was representative of a person's manliness. Alcohol was ubiquitous in the East among the SS, Wehrmacht, and even non-German auxiliaries that aided in the killing of Jews. But arguably the most salient takeaway for readers well-versed in the historiography of the Holocaust is Westermann's response to the traditional narrative that alcohol was primarily used as a coping mechanism for those perpetrators who, while perhaps virulently antisemitic, found the violent treatment or murder of Jews distasteful or viscerally re-

pugnant. Perhaps the narrative of alcohol as a genocidal lubricant and salve is inherently attractive to some studying the Holocaust because it helped explain and rationalize the monstrous behavior of the perpetrators. Indeed, Westermann indicates that this narrative was constructed in large part by surviving perpetrators after the war as a sort of alibi in their attempt to excuse or at least better contextualize their participation in wanton acts of violence and murder. And while there are certainly instances of alcohol consumption by perpetrators to soothe themselves, Westermann demonstrates that it was hardly the rule among their cohort.

Instead, Westermann situates the consumption and cultural significance of alcohol in the broader backdrop of intoxication and exhibitions of raw masculinity that were pervasively integrated into the way that the genocide itself was conducted. Westermann is clear that the Holocaust would have happened without alcohol, but he provides myriad instances of how perpetrators went out of their way to hunt, humiliate, and sexually assault Jews for pure sport. Alcohol was not the cause of these actions, but it was part of the broader culture of masculine domination blending with antisemitic ideology and a power dynamic established by violent force. Westermann replaces the familiar image of an Einsatzgruppen functionary drinking to numb his senses before murdering Jews or a Wehrmacht soldier imbibing after a mass shooting to forget the goriness and inhumanity of the preceding action with that of a perpetrator engaging in drunken revelry as a celebratory ritual before, during, and after a mass shooting.

Even beyond alcohol, the ritualistic projection of the power dynamic over Jews was manifested in numerous ways, including eating a meal during a special action or while sitting on top of a corpse, contravening SS policy by taking photographs of atrocities and distributing them among comrades as a proud souvenir, or constructing sadistic games of degradation, rape, and torture—almost always culminating in murder—for sheer amusement. Although many of these actions were technically in violation of Reich policy, the enforcement of such regulations in the East were infrequent compared with similar transgressions in German-occupied Western Europe—yet another illustration of the ways in which Nazi standards for behavior were intimately linked to ideology and racial hierarchy. However, Westermann does provide ample evidence to dismantle any previously held sense that concerns around “race defilement” dissuaded the Germans from engaging in sexual violence against Jewish victims. Quite to the contrary, it was remarkably commonplace and symbolic of the role that intoxication, with both alcohol and power, had in the Holocaust.

The granular level of detail provided in each chapter is both revealing and explicitly brutal. While Holocaust scholarship necessarily involves engagement with subject matter that is intrinsically cruel and violent, *Drunk on Genocide* chronicles dozens of events that can be jarring even to those who are well accustomed to the inescapable sadism and carnage of the subject. Westermann's decision to include these graphic accounts is purposeful. While the use of alcohol is as fundamental to the book as the title would indicate, this is not a work exclusively about the use of alcohol. Rather, Westermann uses alcohol as a conduit for a larger discussion about the role of intoxication, celebration, and ritualism among the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Given the subject matter and what happened, there is no other effective way for Westermann to illustrate his thesis and properly counter some of the older or more mainstream conceptions of the actual part

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played by alcohol and sexual violence in the Holocaust than to provide these vividly appalling accounts.

Both of Westermann's works are thoroughly researched and especially scholarly in nature. While some books on the Holocaust can genuinely be appreciated by both a mainstream and academic readership, neither *Hitler's Ostkrieg* and *The Indian Wars* nor *Drunk on Genocide* are written in a way that makes them particularly accessible for a more popular audience, although the former may have a broader appeal given its comparative approach in straddling both American and European History. Because Westermann does not use a classic narrative or chronological approach in either book, but instead employs a thematic structure, each chapter goes into painstaking detail to offer brief accounts, testimonials, and narratives that evince the relevant theme. In each chapter or section, the illustrative examples provided by Westermann are scattered across several years and can be challenging for readers wishing for something that flows more naturally or intuitively. Yet none of this detracts from the importance of each of these books in their own right.

Readers familiar with the Holocaust will find that the comparative framework of *Hitler's Ostkrieg* may better inform on the conflict between the United States and the native peoples of the American

West, while also clarifying both elements of congruence and singular aspects of the Holocaust that may not be as apparent in the context of a more traditionally narrow or isolated scholarly exercise. By contrast, *Drunk on Genocide* will offer readers a more ground-level psychological and sociological approach to the Holocaust while correcting some common misconceptions about the behavior and motivations of the perpetrators and the experiences of the victims. Committed students and scholars of the Holocaust eager to stay apprised of some of the newer and more creative scholarship on the subject will be well-served by each of these recent works by Edward Westermann.

Nathan Gondelman received his B.A. in history from UVM in 2009, and his MA in 2015. He is Assistant Program Director at UVM's Student Accessibility Services Office, and a member of the Miller Center's Board of Advisors.

Edward Westermann will be visiting UVM in April 2023 to deliver the annual Holocaust Remembrance Lecture.

Steinberg Offers New Course on the Persecution of the Roma

Jonah Steinberg, associate professor of anthropology, received in 2021 an Ader-Konigsberg Curriculum Development Grant to design and teach a new course, "The Roma Holocaust," which made its debut this past spring semester. The course explored in detail the seldom-recounted Nazi genocide of Roma-Sinti people (including Manouche, Gítano, Caló, and other related communities), and situated the genocide in the context of enduring exclusionary structures, deportations, and massacres that both preceded it, over many centuries, and that have followed it. Some of those anti-Roma structures, policies, and practices have remained in place to the present day, as Romani people remain one of Europe's most broadly persecuted minorities. Moreover, most European countries have done little to teach young people about the Romani experience in the Holocaust and how to commemorate it. Memorials are scant, internment and death camps are forgotten for the sake of golf courses or housing projects, and reparation, restitution, and apologies have been feeble or non-existent. Even the academy rarely attends to the *Samudaripen*, as many Roma call the Nazi genocide, and thus, historiographically and epistemologically, the academy reifies, reproduces, and reinforces the same exclusionary structures.

It is in this context that the course not only addressed the rarely recounted facts but constituted a call to engagement with palpable, action-oriented projects. To this end, Steinberg fostered the development of student "working groups" with real-world tasks, products, and tangible outcomes. This included the crafting of a letter that takes Netflix to task for its decision to do nothing about and to refrain from apologizing for a 2021 comedy special at the center of which was a hate-filled joke about the genocide of Roma and Sinti people. A further project was the development of a sourcebook on and resource list for the dire situation of Roma in the Ukrainian crisis.

Course activities also benefitted from Steinberg's role as the curator for a major museum exhibit about Romani history and culture and his work with a coalition of artists to develop an audiovisual memorial for unrecognized Nazi-era detention camps for Roma and Sinti. One working group was thus engaged in developing and exploring museum and memorial work, as well as public art that connects directly with these projects. Students also had the opportunity, by virtue of this project, to hear from some of the relevant artists and activists directly. They saw museological decisions in the making and were exposed to rare primary sources. One of their projects offered them the option to design their own commemorative or interpretive space.

The Roma genocide tends to be underrepresented in scholarly materials on the Holocaust, and underrepresented or unknown in popular narratives on the subject. Moreover, in the many states and societies that have failed to make the Romani Holocaust an object of apology or reparation, vicious forms of persecution and segregation continue. Germany itself was astonishingly slow to identify the Nazi persecution of Roma as racially-driven, and managed to resist recompense, reparation, and restitution—and thereby also the symbolic gestures associated with the admission of wrongdoing—until nearly the 1980s. This course addressed critical gaps in public knowledge and in institutional commitments, even as it explored contemporary modalities of hate and massacre in which troubling ties between the *Samudaripen* and racist acts and policies in the present are evident. Steinberg's intent was not only to teach about the Romani Holocaust, but also to highlight these lacunae. The course is UVM's only offering on any subject related to the global Romani population.

Andrea Löw at UVM

By Elisabeth Champion

On Monday, March 14, the Miller Center for Holocaust Studies hosted a public lecture by the German historian Andrea Löw at the Silver Pavilion of the UVM Alumni House. Dr. Löw visited from Washington D.C., where she is currently the 2021-2022 J.B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Senior Scholar in Residence at the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Although currently residing in Washington, Löw is also the Deputy Director of the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History, Munich, and professor of history at the University of Mannheim. Her extensive research focuses on the Holocaust, Jewish history, and Jews in the ghettos of Eastern Europe. Löw's publications include *The Holocaust and European Societies: Social Processes and Social Dynamics* (London, 2016), co-edited with Frank Bajohr, and *Juden im Getto Litzmannstadt: Lebensbedingungen, Selbstwahrnehmung, Verhalten* (Göttingen, 2006). She is currently editing a volume on the German occupation of Poland with Professor Jonathan Huener of UVM.

The lecture, titled “‘Our Days were Numbered’: German-Speaking Jews after their Deportation to Occupied Eastern Poland,” focused on Jewish men, women, and children deported to ghettos in eastern occupied Poland, Minsk, and Riga. Relying on diaries, letters, memoirs, and testimonies, Dr. Löw offered a glimpse into the social and cultural environment of ghettos in eastern Europe. After deportation, German-speaking Jews found themselves “in an entirely new and foreign social environment” where they were “constantly confronted with terror, violence, and death.” Löw highlighted Jewish deportees’ expectations and experiences, including their squalid living conditions. constant state of hunger and, for many, the



Andrea Löw. Photo: Megan Gamiz

death that ensued, whether in the ghettos themselves or in the killing centers in Nazi-occupied Poland.

Löw also shared with the audience compelling examples of German-speaking Jews struggling to survive. Stressing the significance of social ties in the ghettos, she explained how some Jews strove to preserve a sense of normalcy even in the face of death. For example, while showing the audience a photograph of gallows in the Riga ghetto, Dr. Löw described how Jews occasionally played soccer in the courtyard where hangings occurred. Moreover, for many Jews, social and familial relations became a significant part of survival. Additionally, ghettos developed a cultural life that offered theatrical productions and concerts. The Jewish Councils organized schools for children, and families strove to stay together at all costs.

The following day Andrea Löw was hosted by students in two of Jonathan Huener's undergraduate history courses. I had the opportunity to participate in her visit to the course on the history of Poland. Löw began the session by taking questions about her lecture from the previous evening and other topics associated with her research. The discussion then turned to a dialogue about a wide variety of issues, ranging from how the Holocaust is taught in German schools today to why the Nazis initially established the ghettos, children's experiences, and survivor experiences in Poland after 1945. Dr. Löw responded to student questions with warmth and precision, providing the class an excellent opportunity to learn from and speak with an expert in the field.

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Elisabeth Champion is a first-year student in the Master of Arts program in history at the University of Vermont.

Borra and Neroni Receive Course Development Grants

In 2021 the Miller Center issued to faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences a call for proposals for new courses in Holocaust Studies. A faculty committee composed of Professors Anne Clark (Religion), Susanna Schrafstetter (History), and Jonathan Huener (History) reviewed the proposals and awarded course development grants to Professors Lutz Kaelber (Sociology) and Jonah Steinberg (Anthropology) for the summer of 2021. Professors Antonello Borra (Romance Languages and Cultures/Italian) and Hilary Neroni (English/Film and Television Studies) received grants for the summer of 2022.

The grants, funded this year by the Altschuler Endowment for Holocaust Studies and Kinsler Endowment for Holocaust Studies, are intended to deepen and diversify the Holocaust Studies curriculum at UVM, which serves students in the College of Arts and Sciences, including those pursuing a minor in Holocaust Studies.

Antonello Borra will be developing a course titled “Italy and the Holocaust,” which will acquaint students with the experience of Italian Jews prior to, during, and after the Holocaust. The course will include close readings of classic works such as Giorgio Bassani’s *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* and Primo Levi’s *Survival in Auschwitz*, and analysis of films such as those of Vittorio De Sica and Francesco Rosi, and it will then concentrate on how post-World War II Italian literature, poetry, memoirs, and film have confronted the political oppression and racial discrimination of the Fascist years.

Hilary Neroni’s course, “The Holocaust in Film,” will be taught in the Film and Television Studies Program. It will address the role of film in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, and the complex relationship in these contexts between propaganda, persecution, and genocide. The course will also consider the importance of documentary film footage shot during and in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, and the role of film as witness and a vector of memory. Students will then turn to analysis of fictional films representing the Holocaust and the sociopolitical work they do. Throughout the course, students will confront the social and philosophical implications of the relationship between film aesthetics and the Holocaust, as well as the cultural and political roles that film has played in different contexts and historical periods.

Holocaust Studies Courses Offered at UVM • 2021-2022

Fall 2021

History 191 – World War II (Buchanan)
History 227 – Seminar: Nazism and Fascism (Steinweis)

Spring 2022

Anthropology 195 – The Roma Holocaust (Steinberg)
History 115 – History of Poland (Huener)
History 190 – The Holocaust (Huener)
History 191 – World War II (Buchanan)

Fall 2022

History 190 – The Holocaust (Huener)
History 395 – Seminar: Nazi Germany and the Churches (Huener)
Sociology 125 – Sociology of the Holocaust (Kaelber)

News from the Faculty



Adriana Borra (German, Italian, French) is currently on a full-year sabbatical in Italy while working on several projects. She has just finished translating 600 neologisms for the third edition of *Il Tedesco SMART*, an Italian-German/German-Italian dictionary she has been involved in for over twenty-five years. She is also collecting and developing more “Drama in Education” elements to incorporate into her existing courses, and is creating a new course for the Italian program similar to her successful “Staging German” class. “Drama in

Education” puts performative foreign languages didactics center stage and has developed as a distinct field of research and practice since the 1970s. In October 2021 Borra was invited to present a six-hour workshop on “Staging German—Creating an Active Classroom Through Drama in Education” to colleagues and advanced students in the German Department at the Università della Valle d’Aosta. She is also taking advantage of professional development opportunities in alignment with her teaching passion and has found the following three particularly useful in expanding her portfolio of energizing activities that are easily adoptable to any language level: “Dorothy Heathcote’s Mantle of the Expert,” a discussion led by David Allen, “Embodied English—Motion and Emotion in Language Learning,” a ninety-minute workshop by Miriam Stewart, and “Drama in Education: Drama and Theater in Language Teaching and Learning,” a four-day online conference offering a wide range of highly interactive workshops. Adriana also co-authored two articles, now accepted for publication, about lexicographic matters: “Kulturrealia als lexikographische Herausforderung in zweisprachigen Wörterbüchern,” co-authored with Luisa Giacomina, and “Il nuovo dizionario di Tedesco: Das Großwörterbuch Italienisch Zanichelli als digitales Hilfsmittel in der Fremdsprachendidaktik,” co-authored with Luisa Giacomina and forthcoming in *L’Analisi Linguistica e Letteraria*. Borra will return to UVM in August 2022 and resume her teaching duties.



Antonello Borra (Italian/Romance Languages) is currently on a sabbatical leave in Italy pursuing research on contemporary poetry, both in his native language, Piedmontese, and in standard Italian. An essay on Dante’s *Paradiso* is appearing in *Italica* and several articles and book reviews on Italian poetry are in print. A set of his own poems appeared in the last issue of *Italian Poetry Review*. He is also preparing

a new course on Italy and the Holocaust that he will teach in the Spring of 2023.

This year **Andrew Buchanan** (History) published two articles: “Domesticating Hegemony: Creating a Globalist Public 1941 – 1943” in *Diplomatic History* (January 2021) and “Globalizing



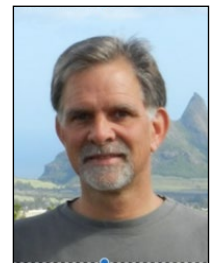
the Second World War” in *Past & Present*. The latter is currently only available in the online edition but will appear in print in early 2023. Buchanan is currently completing a book manuscript for Bloomsbury Press, provisionally titled *The Long World War II: Revolution, Decolonization, and the Rise of American Hegemony*, and working with a group of scholars around the world on a collection of essays on the “Greater World War II.”



Meaghan Emery (French) specializes in twentieth- and twenty-first-century French and Francophone literature, cinema, and culture with a particular focus on intellectual resistance and collaboration during the Second World War, decolonization, and contemporary French narrative. Her book *The Algerian War Retold: Of Camus’s Revolt and Postwar*

Reconciliation (Routledge, 2020), focuses on the legacy of Albert Camus and the philosophical paradigms of resistance and revolution used by contemporary authors and filmmakers when speaking about the still controversial and hitherto state-censored events of the Algerian War. Her scholarly articles have been published in the *Athenaeum Review*, *Contemporary French Civilization*, *Fiction and Film for Scholars of France*, *French Cultural Studies*, *French Historical Studies*, *H-France Salon*, and the *Journal of Camus Studies*. She is currently working on a new monograph, which focuses on the erotic subject in postcolonial literature and contemporary works from the Francophone world.

In the summer of 2021 **Jonathan Huener** (History) completed an essay on “The Churches and the Holocaust” for the forthcoming *Cambridge History of the Holocaust*, to appear with Cambridge University Press in 2023. From August until December, he was a Distinguished Fellow in the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, Germany, where he undertook research on his next book, a history of the Reichsgau Wartheland, a region of Poland annexed by Nazi Germany in 1939. During the spring 2022 semester, he taught courses in the Holocaust Studies curriculum on the history of the Holocaust and the history of Poland, and also resumed his work as Director of the Miller Center for Holocaust Studies. Huener returned to Munich as a fellow of the Institute for Contemporary History from May until August 2022.



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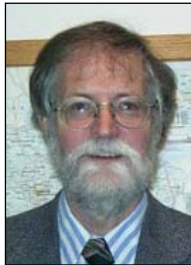
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Lutz Kaelber (Sociology) attended a conference in Germany in fall 2021 and presented a paper on the compensation of victims of compulsory sterilizations in Japan and the United States. He published papers on the Hadamar “mixed-race” ward (1943–1945) and Jewish parents who lost children at Hadamar in several journals and a small

booklet, and published two chapters on the same subject in two books. Kaelber also developed a syllabus for a new course, “Sociology of the Holocaust,” which will be taught for the first time in the fall of 2022.

Dennis Mahoney (German and Russian, emeritus) delivered the keynote address at the festivities celebrating the 250th anniversary of the birth of the Romantic poet Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) on May 1, 2022, in Oberwiederstedt, Germany. The following day, at a conference in nearby Halle on the network of relationships between Novalis and his contemporaries, Mahoney’s play “Romantisches Gipfeltreffen im Hause Schlegel” was performed by the Kammerspiele Magdeburg. In the meantime, the latest issue of *Blüthenstaub: Jahrbuch für Frühromantik* has appeared in print, containing the proceedings of the 2019 conference of the International Novalis Society on the topic of Romanticism and Modernism. His contribution addresses the impact of Romanticism on the thought of Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979) as well as Marcuse’s influence on such American thinkers as Norman O. Brown and Susan Sontag and activists such as Abbie Hoffman.

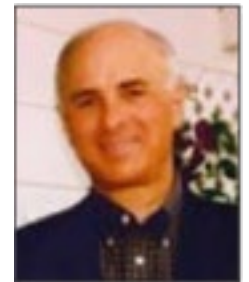


Wolfgang Mieder (German and Russian, emeritus) published four books: “*Was soll es bedeuten?*”: *Das Lorelei-Motiv in Literatur, Sagen, Kunst, Medien und Karikaturen* (Wien: Praesens Verlag, 2021), “*There is No Free Lunch*”: *Six Essays on Modern Anglo-American Proverbs* (Burlington: The University of Vermont, 2021), *Dictionary of Authentic American Proverbs*

(New York: Berghahn Books, 2021) and, with A. Litovkina, H. Hrisztova-Gotthardt, P. Barta, and K. Vargha *Anti-Proverbs in Five Languages: Structural Features and Verbal Humor Devices* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). He also edited the thirty-eighth volume of *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship* (Burlington: The University of Vermont, 2022). After almost four decades, this marks the end of the printed volumes of this annual publication (publishing it as a book and mailing it throughout the world is financially no longer sustainable) but it will continue to be published electronically at the University of Osijek in Croatia. Several of Mieder’s articles on proverbs and fairy tales appeared in publications in Germany, Great Britain, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Spain, and the United States—among them: “‘A Miss is as Good as a Male’: From Innovative Anti-

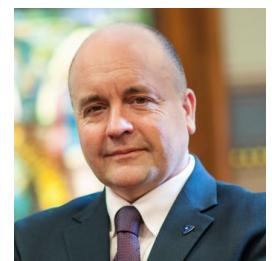
Proverbs to Modern Proverbs,” in *The Discoursal Use of Phrasological Units*, ed. Elena Arsenteva (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021), 61–89; “‘Die Sonne bringt es an den Tag’: Vom Märchen zur Ballade und zum (Anti-) Sprichwort,” in *Beiträge zum mündlichen, literarischen und medialen Erzählen*, ed. Petra Hinstedt (Münster: Waxmann, 2021), 149–169; “‘Time Spent Wishing is Time Wasted’: Temporal Worldview in Modern American Proverbs,” in *Signs of Language and Senses of Culture*, ed. Nikolai Boldyrev (Moscow: In’t Iazykoznaniiia RAN, 2021), 365–374; and “‘Early to Bed / Früh zu Bett’: Parömiographische Vermittlung zwischen Benjamin Franklin und K.F.W. Wander,” *Linguistische Treffen in Wrocław*, 19 (2021), 219–263. He also presented several lectures in the United States and abroad, albeit all virtually due to the pandemic.

Frank Nicosia (History, emeritus) has continued the very slow process of working on the mostly hand-written private papers of Ernst Marcus, a Jewish leader in Berlin during the 1930s. It is not yet clear whether the result will be a book manuscript or a couple of journal articles. He has also reviewed several book manuscripts for publishers in the fields of modern German history, German-Jewish history, and Holocaust Studies.



Nicole Phelps (History) delivered the public keynote address on “The US-Austrian Treaty of 1921 and the Reconfiguration of Euro-American Relations” in August 2021 as part of a conference on “The US-Austria Peace Treaty at 100,” organized by the Nanovic Institute for European Studies at Notre Dame University. Her new textbook, *Americans & International Affairs to 1921*, was published by Cognella in March 2022. She continues to work on a large project about the US Consular Service from its founding in 1789 until 1924, when its functions and those of the diplomatic corps were transferred to the newly created US Foreign Service. In August 2022 she is scheduled to present part of that research in a public talk at the John Hay Estate at The Fells in New Hampshire. In 2021–2022, she developed two new courses, including an advanced research seminar on Reconstruction and the 1876 Election and an intermediate-level course on the 1876, 1893, and 1904 world’s fairs, and she is planning a course on the US Civil War in global context for the fall 2022 semester. Phelps remains an active leader of the Phi Beta Kappa honor society chapter at UVM and in curricular affairs in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Jody Prescott (Computer Science and Environmental Studies) taught a new class this year, “ENVS 295, Energy & Climate Law.” In June 2021, he was invited to a meeting of experts sponsored by the Legal Division of



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the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to identify pathways to increase greater compliance with international humanitarian law in protecting women and girls. For the ninth year, he presented the *Ordinary Soldiers* lesson plan again in the fall to the senior Army ROTC cadets at Norwich University and to international officers in the annual Human Rights & Law of Armed Conflict course that the Defense Institute for International Legal Studies runs in Newport, Rhode Island. At the invitation of the ICRC section that works with arms-carriers, he also presented remotely on his book *Empirical Assessment in IHL Education & Training: Better Protection for Civilians and Detainees in Armed Conflict* to senior international military officers at its annual Senior Workshop on International Rules Governing Military Operations, and then later to a joint webinar held by the ICRC and the International Society for Military Ethics in Europe about norms and values that promote compliance with the law of armed conflict. This winter, at the annual symposium of Loyola University Law School's international law journal, he presented remotely on his books *Armed Conflict, Women and Climate Change, and Empirical Assessment in IHL Education & Training: Better Protection for Civilians and Detainees in Armed Conflict*, and his project proposing the inclusion of gender considerations in the ICRC's pending rewrite of its influential Commentary on Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions. In April 2022, he remotely judged competition rounds for the annual 9/12 Cybersecurity Challenge conducted by the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. In May, he participated in a remote panel presenting to senior officer students at the US Army War College on operational issues involving gender. Over the summer, he will continue to work with his co-author Professor Robin Lovell (Manhattan College) and a graduating group of natural resource majors on a project to create a model for developing a computer mapping staff product that would stack overlays of gender inequality, armed conflict, and climate change for an operational area to show locations where women and girls would be most likely at risk of the compounding effects of these forces.



Susanna Schrafstetter (History) published an edited collection titled *After Nazism: Relaunching Careers in Germany and Austria*, coedited with Thomas Schlemmer and Jürgen Zarusky. Volume 5 of the *German Yearbook for Contemporary History*, a series sponsored by the Leibniz-Institute for Contemporary History in Munich, Germany, it appeared with University of Nebraska Press. She is

currently on sabbatical in Germany working on her book project about German-Jewish refugees in Mussolini's Italy. Schrafstetter is also working on a coedited volume, provisionally titled *Recht, Unrecht und Gerechtigkeit: Justiz zwischen Diktatur und Demokratie* (Law, Injustice and Justice: Judicial Systems between Dictatorship and Democracy). The English edition of her book *Flight and Concealment: Surviving the Holocaust Underground in Munich and Beyond* is in publication with Indiana University Press.



Helga Schreckenberger (German and Russian) published the article "'Ich lebe jetzt zwei ganz getrennte Leben': Negotiating Cultural Identity in Alya Rakhmanova's *Milchfrau in Ottakring*" in the *Journal of Austrian Studies* 54/1 (2021). She also contributed the article "The Ordinary Fate of Exile: Hertha Pauli's *Der Riß der Zeit geht durch mein Herz* (1970)" to *Exilforschung zur Exilforschung: Zum Jahrhundertleben eines transatlantischen Brückenbauers. Festschrift zu Ehren von Guy Stern* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2022). An English translation of her article "'Es wär vielleicht ein neues Exil und vielleicht das schmerzlichste': Das Thema der Rückkehr in Oskar Maria Graf's Briefen an Hugo Hartung" appeared in *First Letters after Exile by Thomas Mann, Hanna Arendt, Ernst Bloch and Others*, ed. David Kettler and Detlef Garz (London, New York: Anthem Press, 2021). She gave the virtual presentations "The Dark Side of Globalization: Illegal Migration in Julia Rabinowich's *Die Erdfröserin* (2012)" at the Twenty-Seventh International Conference of Europeanists; "The Transformational Impact of Transnational Encounters in Vladimir Vertlib's *Lucia Binar und die russische Seele* (2015)" at the annual meeting of the Austrian Studies Association, University of Poznan, Poland; and "Channeling the American Pioneer: Alice Herdan-Zuckmayer's *Die Farm in den Grünen Bergen*" at the biannual meeting of the North American Society for Exile Studies: Environments of Exile—Nature, Refugees, and Representations," and was able to attend the annual meeting of the German Studies Association in Indianapolis and present "Emplotting the Austrian Anschluss: Guido Zernatto's *Die Wahrheit über Österreich* (1939)." Schreckenberger also served as an online panelist discussing the 1963 East German film "Nackt unter Wölfen" (*Naked Among Wolves*) at the Holocaust Museum LA on August 12, 2021.

David Shiman is Professor Emeritus of Education and retired in 2014. He published the curriculum resource books *The Prejudice Book; Teaching Human Rights, Economic and Social Justice: A Human Rights Perspective*; and *Human Rights Here and Now*, which he coauthored. Shiman has conducted human rights education and prejudice reduction/anti-discrimination workshops in Guyana, Poland, Slovakia, South Africa, England, Palestinian territories, and across this country. His writings specific to the Holocaust include "Teaching the Holocaust with a Human Rights Framework," in *Reflections on the Holocaust*, ed. W. Mieder & D. Scrase, (Burlington: Center for Holocaust Studies, University of Vermont, 2001), 189–210 and, with William Fernekas, "The Holocaust, Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship Education" published in *Social Studies* 90, no. 2 (March-April 1999), 53–62.

Jonah Steinberg (Anthropology) continued to pursue new directions in research and teaching surrounding the persecution of the Roma and Sinti people.



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This included a new course (see page 8), extramural funding requests in conjunction with Roma and Sinti artists for an audiovisual memorial at un-commemorated sites of former camps, and ethnographic explorations on questions of collective memory. The genocide of the Romani people is neglected and underrepresented both by societies at large and in scholarship, and a special focus of Steinberg's work is the absence of commemoration, apology, reparation, restitution, and research, especially in light of persistent, ongoing modes of segregation, exclusion, and massacre. Steinberg is also working with Roma scholars and leaders to support a campaign to accord the Romani language UNESCO Intangible Heritage status. He has also set in motion an exhibition on Romani art, culture, and history at the Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée (MuCEM)—a national "Tier-1" museum in Marseille, France, and one of the fifty most visited museums in the world. The exhibition, titled "Barvalo," in partnership with Berlin's Roma-led European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERAC), opens in May of 2023. It is collaborative and participatory, both in its mobilization of a transnational council of experts, activists, and leaders, largely of Romani heritage, and in its imbrication with local communities across Europe, including in Marseille itself. The exhibition will involve community activities, such as "maker faires," film expositions, concerts, and activities in local schools and communities, along with global museum partnerships and other public-facing activity and activism.



Alan E. Steinweis (History) served as acting director of the UVM Miller Center for Holocaust Studies in the fall 2021 semester. He completed work on a book, *The People's Dictatorship: A History of Nazi Germany*, which will appear in early 2023 with Cambridge University Press. He

published a book chapter, "Kristallnacht and the Reversibility of Progress," in *Die Zukunft der Erinnerung: Perspektiven des Gedenkens an Nationalsozialismus und Shoah*, edited by Stefan Vogt (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021). He also published a book review of *New Perspectives on Kristallnacht: After 80 Years, the Nazi Pogrom in Global Comparison*, edited by Wolf Gruner and Steven J. Ross, in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. In November 2021, Steinweis delivered online talks at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York and Holocaust Museum LA in Los Angeles, in connection with the anniversary of the Kristallnacht pogrom. In summer 2022 he will be a visiting professor at the University of Augsburg, Germany.

Richard Sugarman became Emeritus Professor of Religion at UVM in June 2021. He taught philosophy, religion, humanities, Holocaust studies, and Jewish studies at UVM for over 50 years. His most recent book, *Levinas and the Torah: A Phenomenological Approach*, was published by State University of New York Press in 2019.



It was reissued in paperback in 2020. Levinas (1906-1995) is widely considered the most important Jewish philosopher of the Holocaust and its continuing implications. In summer 2021, Sugarman served as the keynote speaker of the North American Levinas Society, and his talk focused on the ethical dimensions of generational responsibility. He thanks his colleagues and students who have enlivened and augmented the study of this onerous, but centrally important subject for every liberal arts student.



G. Scott Waterman (Psychiatry, emeritus) is retired from teaching but remains engaged in activities related to the philosophy of psychiatry and to Holocaust studies. He continues to serve on the Executive Council of the Association for the Advancement of Philosophy and Psychiatry and to chair its Karl Jaspers Award Committee, which annually selects the best

paper by a student or trainee on a topic within that subdiscipline. His commentary, "A Universal Definition of Mental Disorder: Neither Necessary nor Desirable," was published in the December 2021 issue of *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology*. He has two additional articles currently in press in that same journal: "Epistemic Humility: Accruing Wisdom or Forsaking Standards?" and a response to commentaries on that piece titled "Epistemic Humility, Justice, and Honesty in Clinical Care." In May 2022 he presented "Therapeutic Theories, Placebos, and Transparency: Analytical and Ethical Considerations" at the annual conference of the Association for the Advancement of Philosophy and Psychiatry in New Orleans. He remains chair of the Advisory Board of the Miller Center for Holocaust Studies. As a volunteer member of the Pulse Oximetry Team through the Medical Reserve Corps of the Vermont Department of Health, he maintained telephone communication with Vermonters diagnosed with Covid-19 during the Delta variant surge.

Steve Zdatny (History) has had a reasonably productive year, while teaching in-person the whole time and continuing to work toward finishing his book manuscript, tentatively titled *The Threshold of Disgust: Hygiene in Modern France*. Zdatny will be on sabbatical leave for the 2022-2023 academic year. He has accepted an invitation to be a visiting scholar at Oxford University and may also accept a research appointment at the Collegium, a research institute attached to the Université de Lyon-II in Lyon, France. At any rate, he swears by Zeus that the manuscript will be finished by the summer of 2023. With any luck it will have found a publisher and be well on its way to becoming an international bestseller. Zdatny also was invited to France in January 2022 by the Sorbonne as part of an examining committee for a faculty promotion (a *Habilitation de Diriger la Recherche*—HDR), and has thrown his *chapeau* into the ring for a conference on urban hygiene that will take place in Le Havre in October. For the rest, it was the usual round of writing book reviews and reviewing other people's manuscripts and being part of a round table on the History of French Fashion at this spring's meeting (live and in person!) of the Society for French Historical Studies.

Student News



Elisabeth Champion completed her first year of the history MA program, where she is focusing on the history of the Holocaust. She graduated as an Ada Comstock Scholar from Smith College, where she majored in European and women's history. As an under

graduate, Elisabeth researched displaced children after World War II, and she is pursuing her MA with the interest of researching children's experiences during and after the war. Since arriving at UVM, she has focused on children's experiences in the Hitler Youth in Nazi Germany, pursuing questions such as: What did participation entail for boys and girls in the Hitler Youth? What did childhood look like for those coming of age under National Socialism? In so doing, Champion has explored the gendered experiences of children swept up in the Nazi machine. In her second semester she focused on Jewish children's experiences in the ghettos of occupied Poland, developing an interest in the resiliency children showed, even under dire conditions, and how the social, cultural, and intellectual life in the ghettos sustained them. Efforts such as continuing their education or keeping a diary showed children's optimism and will to live, giving them a sense of defiance in the face of persecution. This summer, Champion will be in Berlin studying German at the Humboldt-Institut and will focus in the next academic year on her MA thesis. She plans then to pursue a PhD in history.

After taking time off from his studies to carry out his duties as an officer in the Vermont National Guard, **Sandor Farkas** spent the winter break engaged in Jewish learning with Budapest's Jewish community. He is now completing his MA thesis on political Holocaust memory, which he regrets has become increasingly relevant in light of the renewal of hostilities in Ukraine. He hopes that his work will provide historical insight on how development of political narratives surrounding Nazism and Third Reich atrocities during the Cold War continue to influence American domestic and international political sentiment.



While simultaneously beginning her MA in UVM's Accelerated Master's Program, **Elisabeth Farrell** completed her BA in history and Holocaust studies at UVM in December 2021. During her first year as a master's student, she researched Jewish per-

secution in medieval history in Spain, France, and the Ottoman Empire. She also worked as an assistant at the Miller Center for Holocaust Studies, helping to edit Alan Steinweis's forthcoming book manuscript, accessioning new and donated books to the Miller Center's library collection, editing promotional materials for the program in Holocaust Studies, and serving as Assistant Editor of this issue of this *Bulletin*. During the summer and the fall 2022 semester, Farrell hopes to examine how history is remembered and memorialized in memoirs and museums—a topic she will begin exploring as an intern transcribing survivor testimony at the Holocaust Museum LA in Los Angeles, California.



Liam Hilferty is a second-year graduate student at UVM working towards completing his MA in history. Hilferty graduated from UVM with his BA in spring 2021, majoring in history with a minor in Holocaust studies, and then continued his education at UVM through the History Department's Accelerated Master's Program. He is now focusing on his MA thesis, which examines Ukrainian nationalist monuments in the United States and incorporates issues of collective memory, the legacy of the Holocaust in Ukraine, and the legacy of the Holocaust in the Ukrainian diaspora community.

James Francis Hughes II is a graduate student in history with a focus on modern European history, and especially the German-speaking lands from the late nineteenth century to the present. During the past academic year, he worked at the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies library, where he helped to organize the German- and English-language acquisitions. Before coming to UVM, Hughes earned an undergraduate degree in history at the University of California, Berkeley, where he graduated with honors. While at UC Berkeley, he authored a thesis, under the supervision of historian John Connelly, on far-right politics in Germany in the twenty-first century. During the spring 2021 semester, he completed a research project focusing on the destruction of Jewish populations at the hands of their Polish neighbors, particularly in the Bialystock region of northeastern Poland following the advance of the German Army eastward in June 1941. He also undertook research on German queer culture during the Weimar and Nazi eras. In preparation for his MA thesis, he has been researching the perspectives of historians in the broader field of genocide studies, particularly those who have disqualified

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Student News, continued from Page 15

certain historical events and processes in North America as merely ‘conquest,’ as opposed to outright genocide. He looks forward to spending this summer in Germany furthering his German-language skills at the Humboldt-Institut.

Patrick Sullivan has completed his first year in the MA program in history, where his main areas of interest include national identity and popular thought in late nineteenth-century Europe. Prior to studying at UVM, he graduated in 2021 from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a BA in history and a minor in German. There, he received the “Highest Distinction in History” for an undergraduate thesis, supervised by historian Peter Frit-



zsche, analyzing French Revanchist literature. Over the past semester, he has had the pleasure of working at the Miller Center for Holocaust Studies, serving as a teaching assistant with Professor Sarah Osten, and working on the editorial board of the 2020-2021 *UVM History Review*. His main project at the Miller Center has been assisting in the editing of a collection of essays for the forthcoming book *Poland under German Occupation*, edited by Professor Jonathan Huener of UVM and Andrea Löw of the Institute for Contemporary History, Munich. Pursuing his areas of interest, Sullivan intends to complete a master’s thesis on the formation of national identity in the German Empire.

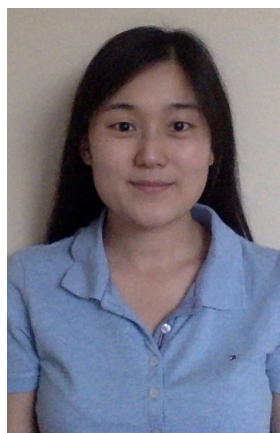
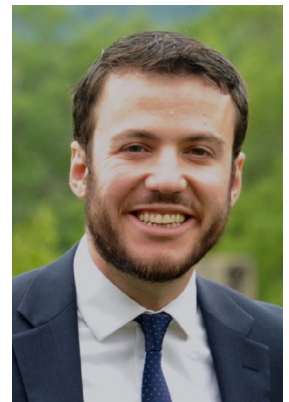
Alumni News



Lauren Fedewa received her MA in history from the University of Vermont in 2018 (BA, History and Germanic Studies, University of Maryland, 2015). She is currently a third-year doctoral candidate in the Department of History and the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto. Lauren’s dissertation examines Polish-Jewish women who “passed” as Polish-Christian forced laborers in Germany during the Holocaust. It challenges the tendency to treat Polish, German, and Jewish histories of the Holocaust and war as separate from one another, and constructs an integrated history of the phenomenon of passing, analyzing the ways in which Polish-Christian forced laborers, Jewish women “submerged on the surface,” and German employers and officials intersected in Nazi Germany. In the past year, Lauren passed her Polish language exam and passed her qualifying exams in the fields of nineteenth and twentieth century European history, modern Jewish history, and genocide, war, and violence. She worked as a teaching assistant for a history course on early modern Europe where she researched and delivered her first lecture. Fedewa was also employed as an Events Assistant at the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies, and still works in her spare time as a tutor in English. In December 2021, she accepted a contractor position at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where she researches and writes encyclopedia entries on sites of racial persecution for non-Jewish Polish and Soviet infants born to forced laborers in Nazi Germany for volume 5 of the USHMM series *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945*. Fedewa was excited to return to this research, which she began while at UVM writing her MA thesis, titled “Between Extermination and Child-Rearing: The

Foreign Child-Care Facilities of Volkswagen and Velpke.” In the 2022-2023 academic year, Lauren will continue dissertation research in Berlin and Warsaw as the recipient of a Claims Conference Saul Kagan Fellowship in Advanced Shoah Studies.

Nate Gondelman is a UVM alumnus (BA, History, 2009; MA, History, 2016). Nate’s primary focus as a student was the relationship between German military fortunes and the trajectory of the Holocaust. Currently, Nate is the Assistant Program Director at UVM’s Student Accessibility Services Office, where he helps oversee the implementation of accommodations for students with disabilities. Nate served as an editor and writer for the *UVM History Review* and regularly writes for the Miller Center for Holocaust Studies *Bulletin*. He also serves on the Miller Center’s Board of Advisors.



Michelle Magin (MA, History, 2012) was recently promoted to the position of Associate Editor in the Mandel Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Since 2019, she has been an integral part of the editorial team for the academic journal *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. A staple of Holocaust and genocide re-

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search, the journal publishes cutting-edge scholarship in the field. She works closely with authors from all over the world to help prepare their work for publication, and has found her time in the academic publications department an enriching and rewarding experience. Prior to her arrival at the USHMM, she worked in the Social Welfare department at the Claims Conference in New York City, and she completed her PhD at the University of Manchester in German Studies in 2016.



Caroline Serling graduated with a BA in history from UVM in 2021. During her time at UVM, Caroline majored in history with a European concentration, focusing on World War II and modern Germany. Under the supervision of Susanna Schrafstetter, she completed her Honors College thesis last spring, focusing on the restitution through American intervention of Nazi looted art. Her thesis explained

the systematic pillage of Jewish property, specifically art, by the Nazi regime, and the American efforts to return it. Her research highlighted how the work of museums, the American legal system, and the internet have aided victims and heirs in achieving successful restitution. While researching the impact of the judicial system, Caroline became interested in law, which led her to the University of St. Andrews in Scotland where she is currently a master's student in Legal and Constitutional Studies. Caroline's current research and master's dissertation continue to draw on her historical interests from UVM and, paired with her

current legal coursework, explain how alternative dispute resolution methods, such as arbitration and mediation, have presented a viable alternative to litigation in regard to the restitution of cultural property, and specifically, Jewish property, looted during World War II.

Dana Smith (MA History, 2011) is currently in her fourth year as an assistant professor in the Holocaust and genocide studies department at Keene State College in Keene, New Hampshire. Her first book, *Jewish Art in Nazi Germany*, was published in March 2022 with Routledge. The book is based on her MA and doctoral research and uses the example of the arts created or performed through the Jewish Cultural League in Bavaria—which included an adult education and public lectures department, a musical department, and a visual arts department (housing a marionette theatre)—to explore issues related to gender, regionalism, and identity. At Keene State, she teaches introductory- and upper-level courses on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, a course on women and the Holocaust, and newly designed courses on art and the Holocaust and Holocaust memory in popular culture, as well as an introductory course on Jewish history. Her next research project will look at Shakespeare in Nazi Germany. Prior to the outbreak of war, the Nazi regime committed a not-insignificant amount of effort toward “Aryanizing” Shakespeare, and his plays counted among the most often performed works on “German” stages and “Jewish” stages—with significant censorship for both.



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PREVIEW OF EVENTS DURING THE 2022–2023 ACADEMIC YEAR

Please note: all dates are approximate, and please continue to check our website for details and scheduling information!

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Monday, October 24, 2022

The Annual Raul Hilberg Memorial Lecture

“‘Boykott,’ Saturday, April 1, 1933, 10:00 a.m.: How Germans Became Defenders of the Fatherland and Jews the Enemy”

Peter Fritzsche, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

“Behind the Glass of Their Lantern: The German Catholic Bishops and National Socialism”

Kevin Spicer, Stonehill College

Tuesday, 28 March, 2023

“Book Thieves: Why the Nazis Did Not Burn My Grandmother’s Cookbook.”

Karina Urbach, School of Advanced Study, University of London

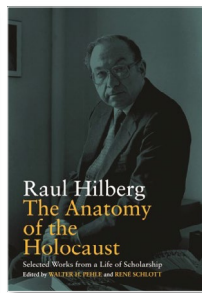
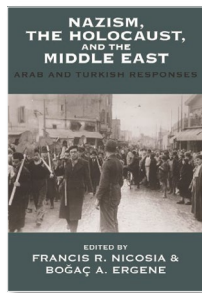
Tuesday, April 18, 2023

Annual Holocaust Commemoration Lecture

“Intoxication, Masculinity, and Mass Murder in Nazi Germany”

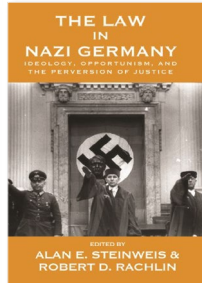
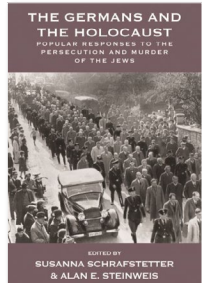
Edward Westermann, Texas A&M University

Vermont Studies on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust Series



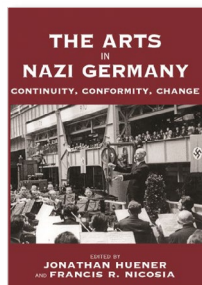
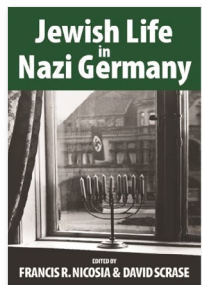
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 • Holocaust and Genocide Studies



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