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REVIEW FORUM

Donald Bloxham, *The Final Solution: A Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

JÜRGEN MATTHÄUS, MARTIN SHAW, OMER BARTOV,
DORIS BERGEN AND DONALD BLOXHAM

JÜRGEN MATTHÄUS

The precision of the indefinite

The very title of Donald Bloxham's new book with its use of the indefinite article will evoke criticism from those who take issue with comparing the Third Reich's 'final solution of the Jewish question' to other genocides.¹ There are good reasons to stress the Holocaust's unique features; yet given the recurrence of state-sponsored mass murder since 1945 and the high likelihood of its perpetuation in a new 'age of slaughter' triggered by racial hatred, economical interest, or ecological crisis,² insisting on the singularity of the 'final solution' by ignoring its linkages with broader phenomena in world history amounts to a form of denial that reduces the ubiquitous demand 'to learn from the past' to an empty platitude. Instead of perpetuating an analytically sterile debate over the issue of uniqueness, we should ask whether Bloxham's book helps us better understand the Holocaust, and what new insights it provides into the origins and driving forces of genocide. In addressing these questions, I will follow the book's main argument as developed in its thematic building blocks: the pre-history of violence in European nation-states since the 'Eastern crisis' of the late 1870s, the unfolding of the Holocaust in the context of German racial planning and European policy-making, reflections on the perpetrators' motivation, and a concluding section on the human condition. Readers will have to excuse that, by focusing on the book's core narrative, my review fails to fully reflect the many facets of Bloxham's multi-layered and deep-structured analysis as well as its linkages to the already available scholarship.

Bloxham's opening assertion that '[T]he history of the Holocaust is itself an international history, and international history always has a comparative

dimension' (p 1) followed by the identification of World War II as the 'most violent period of transnational and interethnic conflict in recent European history' (p 3) seems to vindicate the progress made by Holocaust scholars since the 1990s. Numerous case studies as well as interpretative works have indeed left little doubt regarding the nature of the 'final solution' as a Germany-driven European project the success of which reduced the continent's Jewish population to a mere remnant. Yet, Bloxham feels 'we have reached a plateau in our understanding of Nazi policy' (p 12) and points to a 'disjuncture, a failure of communication, between the empirically grounded work and the theoretically orientated scholarship' (p 13) that his book intends to bridge. In the introduction as well as at the very end of his book he elaborates on his goal: to 'go beyond the simple comparative history of different genocidal phenomena', to 'look at interrelations between cases of genocide and the polities that perpetrate genocide' (p 11), and 'to maximize the light thrown onto the final solution not only by studying its development in detail but by studying prior European ethnopolitics and genocides elsewhere in the world—and to reflect light back onto those other episodes in turn' (p 330). I was certainly sceptical when Bloxham told me of his ambition, as he arrived to write up the project as Senior Scholar-in-Residence at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, and I remained sceptical prior to reading the products of his endeavours. By relying primarily on published works (hardly a surprise for a synthetic study) while presenting a small selection of sources, supplemented by 'documentary traces' in an oddly-placed chapter that owes its existence to the format of the publisher's monograph series, the book seems ill equipped for fulfilling its cognitive illumination purpose and bridge-building function. Furthermore, in questioning 'the understanding—or perhaps the caricature—of the Holocaust that has achieved popular currency' (p 13), Bloxham introduces his study as a 'book about perpetrators, perpetration, and the milieux that produce both' (p 14) while paying little attention to the fate of the perpetrators' victims—a move away from the commonly accepted standards of integrated history set by Saul Friedländer's influential two-volume *Nazi Germany and the Jews* as the benchmark of future scholarship.

What might appear as methodological overreach and conceptual regression turns out to be part of a highly insightful and stimulating analysis with huge potential for expanding the limits of how we understand the correlation between the Holocaust and other genocidal phenomena. Bloxham's urge to challenge established assumptions extends to the image projected on the book's cover: he qualifies the iconographic value of a photograph depicting railway lines leading through the guard tower at Auschwitz-Birkenau with the textual corrective that the tower had not been built yet when most victims arrived in the camp to be instantly murdered (front and back cover, also p 251). In his search for useful ways to foster 'the conceptualization of genocide as a global phenomenon' (p 11), the Edinburgh historian complements the oeuvre of Mark Levene who—most notably in his ground-breaking *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State*—urges the study of not only 'communal attributes or cultural flaws', but also of 'structures of economic, social and political interdependence which have come

to determine the universality of the human experience in modern times'.³ At the same time, Bloxham engages the findings of recent Holocaust scholarship, thus providing a cutting-edge summary of key insights into this specific genocidal process. Readers who find Bloxham's conceptual ambition, stylistic verve and analytical rigour challenging should take a moment to reflect on his arguments against the backdrop of conventional wisdom; doing so opens the vista onto a fascinatingly complex, yet utterly devastated (and devastating) historical landscape in which the Holocaust—not despite, but because of the use of the indefinite article in the book's title—forms the structural centrepiece with clear contours and many linkages to its modern environment.

Part I of the book takes us back to 'A European History of Violence' during the late nineteenth and twentieth century dominated by two mutually reinforcing phenomena: interstate conflict in what Bloxham calls the 'shatterzones' of empires, and the stigmatization of ethnic minorities resulting from the widely accepted idea of national homogeneity. For states whose authority was threatened or destroyed, embarking on genocide provided 'dual benefits' by 'removing 'problem' groups *while simultaneously* sharpening and rendering more exclusive the identity of the majority' (p 41). Older patterns of prejudice clearly played a role in the identification of groups, most notably Jews, that became targets of state-sponsored violence, but how important were other factors in determining when and to what degree this violence would take a genocidal turn? Interstate war provided the stimulus for intra-state destruction. Bloxham's expertise on the Armenian genocide leads him to draw lessons from 'the fusion of geopolitical, ethnic, and economic considerations in (the Committee of Union and Progress's (CUP) [İhîhad ve Terraki Cemiyeti]) strategic design and the fallacy of any attempt to pinpoint one or other of the three factors as somehow decisive on its own' (p 78) to identify the equally multicausal and in no way predetermined trajectory of the genocidal process. The fact that after World War I roughly 1.25 million Ottoman subjects of Christian faith and three-hundred-and-fifty-six thousand Muslims were resettled points to the political prevalence of the notion of ethnic homogeneity as well as its susceptibility to considerations that allowed for non-genocidal manifestations of segregationist policies. Whether the Turkish 'removal of disloyal internal minorities' in the 1920s was admired by 'many a German nationalist' including Hitler (p 88) is thus of less relevance for understanding why the German way of establishing homogeneity lead to the murder of millions than the nation-state system's inherently ethnicized, though not invariably genocidal problem perception. Instances of anti-Jewish violence, many grounded in anticommunist agendas, and the antisemitic infiltration of political cultures in interwar Eastern Europe (about which the book says little despite a growing literature),⁴ as well as the trump value of the 'national self-determination' card for purposes of internal stabilization and external aggrandizement were equally important. In addition to the lingering threat of escalating ethnic violence and the fragility of the post-World War I international system, the 'extirpation of the Jews required the radicalization and license of renewed world war, and the imperative provided by Nazi Germany' (p 89).

Germany's attempted 'final solution of the Jewish question' is the focus of Part 2, starting with the old question 'why Germany' that follows an excursus at the end of Part 1 in which Bloxham takes the reader on a somewhat disorienting tour de force of pre- and post-World War II ethnic agendas and policies. This excursion's chronological and geopolitical jumps leads onto a path from which it is difficult to follow the author—e.g. in his use of UPA, LAF—and Ustaša-World War II mass murder as basis for his assertion that 'whatever the new quality and quantity of horror Germany imposed on Europe, the continent was already a place where extreme collective violence was an accepted measure of resolving identity crises'; yet few will disagree with the Third Reich's identification as 'a product of the continent as well as the most destructive shaper of it' (p 130). 'Why Germany', then, is meant to question the correlation between national peculiarities and the broader European setting without employing lofty generalizations or getting lost in the weeds of *Ereignisgeschichte*. Instead, Bloxham provides a masterful synthesis of the Third Reich's history that alone makes his book stand out among overview studies on the Nazi era. Once invested with governing power, the Nazis could draw on widespread discontent with the Versailles world order including the fate of ethnic Germans abroad, the elites' obsession with 'unity of state and society' (p 136) and their tolerance of force for the purpose of establishing 'order'. The nebulous Nazi vision of a Third Reich combined the specter of ethnic exclusivity and national grandeur with plans for military aggression and territorial expansionism, yet despite allusions to colonial precedents 'Germany's was an imperial project conceived in a very specific spatial and economic setting' (p 185) that evolved over time. If pressed to identify a straight line between prior policies and war-time annihilation, Bloxham would find it rather in the 'violence connecting mass forced sterilization to mass murder' (p 140) during the so-called 'euthanasia'-killings that until summer 1941 claimed the life of more than seventy thousand men, women, and children than in anti-Jewish policies (although he does not explore the link provided by early Jewish victims of 'euthanasia' that Henry Friedlander was one of the first historians to note).⁵ Two elements of Bloxham's argument are particularly noteworthy: first, his focus on reconstructing the stages, agents and driving forces in the development towards the 'final solution' without resorting to undue claims of Nazi policy's intent-driven predetermination; and second, his awareness that ideological concepts like 'racial state', '*Volksgemeinschaft*', '*Lebensraum*' or 'Jewish question' impacted social and political practices while in turn seemingly 'rational' notions like 'security', '*Befriedung*', or 'fitness for labour' had strong roots in stereotypical or ideologized thinking. Domestically, the process of radicalization relied on the eagerness of German elites, particularly the intelligentsia and the bureaucracy, to advance ethnic segregation and embrace aggressive revisionism, on the role of 'new power centers'—Hitler's SS, Göring's Four-Year-Plan, Speer's Armament Ministry—manned by party activists, members of the *Kriegsjugendgeneration* and other 'most enthusiastic Nazi constituents' (p 159), on the rival interests and tactics of different state and party agencies that pursued as well as utilized the regime's strategic goals for their own benefit, and on the German population's 'tacit acceptance of

increasingly radical racial policies and their embrace of some of the ensuing benefits, their general failure to resist a host of subtle and more obvious moral compromises' (p 155). In terms of outside influences, Bloxham identifies the radicalizing tension between the inherent dynamics of the regime's megalomaniac Germanization-, resettlement- and '*Umvolkungs*'-plans on the one hand and the political, economic, and logistical realities on the other.

Within all that context, where is the Holocaust situated? Or varying the question Donald Bloxham poses to open Part 2: Why the Jews? As much as the book presents the stigmatization and persecution of the Jewish minorities in World War II Europe as part and parcel of unstable nation states obsessing over internal enemies and ethnic homogeneity, it also points to the specific utility and advantageousness of anti-Jewish policies resulting from established scapegoating and demonization traditions specific to each country. Bloxham knows too much about the workings of the Nazi regime to either ignore the prevalence of the peculiar dynamics emanating from the interaction between state and party agencies, leaders and followers, ideological planning and political implementation, or to overstate the importance of outside influences. Yet, by differentiating between 'the core of the genocide, and its main object', namely the annihilation of 'the Jews around the pale of Settlement, where Nazi rule was direct and the future Nazi empire was to be erected' on the one hand, and what he calls 'a more explicitly universal, 'existential' objective—the physical destruction of the Jewish race to the fullest extent possible everywhere' (p 186) on the other hand, he reminds us of the danger inherent in the tendency to imply a uniform ideology-driven intent on the part of German leaders that produced genocidal policies irrespective of the consequences. Not only contingencies, but also military, economic, and diplomatic considerations mattered: Bloxham is 'certain that, from some unidentified point in early 1942, there was a central intention that almost every individual Jew (and certainly every community) under German control would be murdered immediately or after labour exploitation', though he leaves open what prompted this 'central intention' and how it impacted the genocidal process; at the same time, he is sure about the existence of 'European Jews that the Nazis would find difficult to reach' (p 186).

In pointing to 'war-fighting ability' as 'the ultimate *raison d'être* of Nazism' while refuting the 'popular understanding' shared by more than one Holocaust scholar that 'the Nazis would have gone literally to the ends of the earth to track down each and every living Jew with no regard for the practical consequences' (p 187), Bloxham raises an important issue that he further explores by looking at the lukewarm and dilatory response from the Reich's allies (despite their own anti-Jewish agendas) since at least mid-1942 and at German reluctance to unilaterally force its '*Judenpolitik*' in order to avoid jeopardizing its standing among its allies. At the same time, he opens himself up to criticism by those who define the uniqueness of the Holocaust in terms of the Nazi leadership's eliminationist intent or stress the extra-European and (in terms of war economy) irrational aspects of especially the last phase of the 'final solution'. While the latter argument is hard to refute, Bloxham broadens the debate by claiming that

the Nazi goal of ‘permanently “crippling”’ by striking at what Eichmann (according to the notoriously unreliable Rudolf Höss) called the ‘biological basis of Jewry in the East’ was just as genocidal in quality; at the same time, Bloxham introduces ‘a conception of genocide that has wider applicability than just the Jewish case’ (p 188) and that, in view of the factual evidence supporting the essence of Höss’ post-war statement, cannot be easily dismissed. Beyond the ‘Jewish case’, Bloxham identifies genocidal elements in German ‘Volkstumspolitik’, economic policies as well as military strategies aimed at annihilation of the enemy and ‘pacification’ of the occupied territories that targeted Poles, ‘gypsies’, Soviet POWs and civilians, alleged partisans in the Balkans and a host of other groups labelled ‘enemies of the Reich’. In his depiction of ‘Operation Barbarossa’, the war against the Soviet Union started by Hitler on 22 June 1941, Bloxham goes far beyond traditional Hitler-centric interpretations and, in a masterful synthesis of recent publications, dives deep into the crucial mechanics of the Nazi system. The Einsatzgruppen’s ‘open-ended’ mandate ‘rendered the personality and sense of duty of individual unit leaders more important than explicit instructions’, and while one can question whether ‘the Wehrmacht had orders corresponding to the Einsatzgruppen’s radical security brief behind the front’ or the latter followed the army’s ‘Kommissarbefehl’, there is indeed ‘no doubting the similarity of ruthless methods and the racist, dehumanized vision of the enemy in colonial ‘anti-insurgency’ warfare outside Europe and the actions of the Wehrmacht beyond major combat operations against the regular Soviet army’ (p 201). By foregrounding the German security forces’ ideologized concern with ‘pacification’ and its self-fulfilling prophecy of facing a ‘security problem’, the murder of the Jews appears as an integral part of a policy that led to the death of millions of civilians and the devastation of entire regions on occupied Soviet territory.

From the east, news about the emergence of mass murder as a realistic option for solving the ‘Jewish question’ travelled back into the Reich where they informed regional functionaries eager to get rid of ‘their’ Jews as well as a leadership willing to sanction further escalation now that it seemed controllable. Hitler’s consenting in September 1941 to the long-standing demands of his party fiefs to deport German Jews followed an ‘ideological imperative’ that also drove ghettoization and forced labour policies while speeding up the ‘onward march of SS-power’ (p 217) in Himmler’s and Heydrich’s race against competing agencies. ‘The question’, Bloxham reminds us, ‘is never about Hitler’s extremism’, but ‘about the alignment of the people and organizations that would give shape and substance to his violent fantasies, and about the course of events that opened new vistas of possibilities’ (p 222). The Wannsee conference was such a possibility, not in terms of triggering the European expansion of mass murder, but for realizing Heydrich’s ‘claim to authority over continent-wide deportation *if* it ever came’ (p 227). By the beginning of 1942, mass murder in the east had already claimed the life of more than half a million Jews, hundreds of thousands of Soviet POWs and tens of thousands of non-Jewish civilians; the first killing centre had opened in December 1941 in Chełmno in the annexed Warthegau. Later in 1942, the ‘epicenter of genocide’ shifted from the occupied Soviet

Union to the Generalgouvernement and particularly the Lublin region. By then, in the absence of adverse factors, a possibility's transformation into reality as well as its frustration created momentum for further escalation on the genocidal scale within and beyond the 'final solution'. Following the trajectory of German destructivity, Bloxham extends his argument regarding the Reich's disinclination of making anti-Jewish policy 'a matter of overbearing pressure or military intervention in reluctant states' for the sake of winning the war (p 236): 'had German victory transpired', he muses, 'the death of European Jewry would have been only one part of a much larger programme of direct and indirect genocide' (p 246). In a similar counterfactual vein, he suggests that had Germany not occupied Hungary in 1944 and embarked on 'one of the fastest mass murders in history', our image of the Holocaust and the role of Auschwitz would be different.

From considering why alternative outcomes failed to eventuate during the Third Reich and what insights can be gained from the actual course of events, Bloxham moves on to address the question 'Why Did They Kill?' (Part 3) in a less speculative way. By combining his analysis of the process of persecution and its trajectory towards the 'final solution' with insights gained from the Rwandan genocide as well as from studies on human motivation and the workings of bureaucracy, Bloxham identifies Nazism as 'both inherently eliminationist as an *ideology* and inherently, ceaselessly dynamic as a political *system*' (p 272). Rooted in this ideological-political nexus, genocidal behaviour evolved in 'places of exception' (p 285): from the confined space of concentration camps and ghettos via the vastness and otherness of the 'East' to the peculiar place of war on the mental map of individuals and groups. Few overview studies have presented the case for multicausality and 'the basic heterogeneity of human motivation' (p 297) with Bloxham's depth of perception. Going against the mainstream of a largely ideology-centered *Täterforschung* that has dominated scholarship especially in Germany in the first decade of the twenty-first century, but also eschewing older images of 'a static machine operated from above, its human components merely cogs in the machine' (p 264), Bloxham urges to break down 'the overly rigid divides between "material interest", "circumstantial pressure", an "ethic of conviction", and an "ethic of responsibility"', and warns against adopting a 'simple voluntaristic explanation for participation based on ideology' (pp 295–296). Acutely aware of the limits the historian faces in exploring what prompted people to act in a certain way in a given situation, Bloxham neither presents ready-made answers nor escapes into multicausal relativism; instead, he prompts questions on under-researched aspects of Holocaust perpetration in particular as well as genocidal behaviour in general: How important was the build-up phase from 1933 to 1939 for the later transformation of 'ordinary men' into *génocidaires*, and what role did the fervour of core groups of fanatics in the SS and among members of other functional elites play in driving the genocidal process not only on the ground, but also *vis-à-vis* a top leadership whose prime interest was winning the war while ensuring the cohesion of the home front? How can we explain the eagerness of adults to abrogate moral responsibility in the face of an either non-existing or purely subjective duress, and to what

degree does the faculty for perpetration emanate from the systemic empowerment of evil personalities?

Bloxham's conclusion that 'organizational power structures everywhere shaped, amplified, and inhibited agency' (p 299) provides segue into Part 4 on 'Civilization and the Holocaust'. Based on his own studies of war crimes adjudications after 1945 and their impact on historiography, Bloxham retraces the construction of interpretational 'building blocks' (p 304). Compared to the concise depiction of the intentionalist, functionalist, and derived historiographic arguments, he goes to great length in refuting the notion of Holocaust uniqueness by reiterating his earlier point 'that the idea that Hitler (and Himmler) actively sought to murder every last Jew everywhere is open to question' (p 316). Bloxham agrees with Dirk Moses' characterization of 'uniqueness' as ultimately 'a religious or metaphysical category' (p 317), so one wonders why he belabours this distracting issue. Especially readers interested in the linkages between the Holocaust and other genocides will find more intellectual stimulus in what Bloxham has to say about the link between intent and implementation:

The dynamics and personnel of the administrative machinery of the Third Reich were intrinsic to the ongoing development of Jewish policy. The idea evolved with the policy ... The system gave the pursuit of murder its vigour and potency but also—without one single, unitary drive – its protean nature. (316–317)

In line with this interpretation, Bloxham sees value in 'new institutionalist approaches' that integrate 'gradually evolving "consensus politics"' (p 321), 'the killing fields of Poland and the USSR' and the 'mobilization of the *Volksgemeinschaft*' (p 322), though he does not ignore the problematic tendency towards overemphasizing ideology that arises from 'the perspective of seeming contemporary freedoms of expression and the post-Cold War triumph of individualism' (p 323). His own study works as a useful corrective and provides, as Mark Mazower put it, 'a fruitful way of rescuing the Holocaust from encyclopaedism, on the one hand, and localism on the other'.⁶

The book concludes with a section on 'Modernization and "Modernity"' that weighs 'the ideas and technologies bequeathed by the Enlightenment' against the 'modernist' tendency of reducing the Holocaust to the 'preoccupation with "suppressing difference"' and of ignoring the key question 'why Jews in particular were targeted so extensively *and* intensively' (p 327). Donald Bloxham's 'multi-faceted, multicausal account of process' (p 321) makes a powerful argument for questioning the analytical utility of definitive explanations in favour of open-ended approximation; at the same time and despite the exclusion of victim perspectives, it provides as precise and insightful a comparative framework for better understanding genocide in general and the Holocaust in particular as can be constructed based on the study of primary sources and cutting-edge scholarship. In combining deep case analysis with broad contextualization, the book delivers what it promises: a bridge between empirical studies and theoretical concepts that connects the Holocaust with other incidents of modern genocide. Uplifting or otherwise placating messages are absent from the story. While Mark Levene

speculates that '[T]he greatest potentiality for genocide world-wide, like Minerva's owl, also comes at the dusk of the human story', Bloxham does not offer history-derived predictions.⁷ Yet, by pointing to the ongoing toxicity of 'border shifts, competition over commerce and natural resources, sovereignty debates, rapid modernization processes, and warfare', 'the intergroup violence that can culminate in genocide', and human societies' capability 'of creating the contexts in which many of their members will kill' (pp 332–333), he leaves little room for optimism.

MARTIN SHAW

Shifting the foundations of genocide research

Donald Bloxham's new book concludes a series of three volumes, published in only five years, which present the most innovative of all recent contributions to genocide research. *The Great Game of Genocide* situated the Armenian Genocide in the context of the regional and great power rivalries and the wider pattern of anti-population violence in south-eastern Europe from the late nineteenth century to the aftermath of the First World War; *The Great Unweaving* began the process of extending this analysis into the mid-twentieth century; and now *The Final Solution* situates the seminal Nazi genocide of the Jews (which he pointedly does not call the Holocaust) in the larger pattern between 1875 and 1949. It is a good moment (particularly since he tells us that he is now moving on to new subjects) to take stock of genocide scholarship after Bloxham. It is fitting, perhaps, for someone who is not a professional historian but a social scientist to draw out the field-reshaping conclusions of his work, and to suggest where we should climb from the new high ground that this argument or scholarship represents.

Bloxham's manifest contribution is to reshape our understanding of genocide in modern history, in four main ways. First, he fundamentally corrects our view of the *extent* of genocide in Europe. Between the late-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries the continent was the site not only, as conventional thinking would suggest, of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, but of more extensive genocide. These 'mega-genocides' (as Mark Levene, one of Bloxham's main companions in rethinking, calls them) were part of much wider patterns of anti-civilian violence at the hands of many states (consolidating nation-states as well as declining and expanding empires) and armed political movements. Although Bloxham is cautious in his use of the term, he suggests that genocide was much more extensive, and other violence even more so. After Bloxham, we can identify a high-genocidal period and region. In the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, genocide became widespread in first south-eastern and then eastern Europe as a whole. (Tim Snyder calls the area between Germany and Russia the 'bloodlands', but Bloxham shows us that the genocidal region was larger and that it developed over a longer period, even if the Second World War was the context of the greatest bloodletting.) Second, he locates the *structural contexts* of European genocide: the lethal mix of geopolitics, nationalism and war in which anti-population policies radicalized to the violence of large-scale expulsion and

mass murder. Third, he shows the *continuities* of genocidal logic and thinking between the periods of the First and Second World War, through the post-1918 international settlement and the interwar crises, and the extent to which they influenced international politics as a whole. Finally, he suggests that European genocide was not *sui generis* but part of the *larger pattern* of imperial history which also spawned ‘colonial genocide’ (which other historians have examined in detail) in the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australasia; indeed European genocide was to considerable extents an imperial and a colonial phenomenon.

Bloxham’s latent contribution is to help shift the methodological and normative fundamentals of genocide research. Here too there seem to be four main inputs. First, he shows that it will no longer do to examine ‘genocides’ as discrete, isolated episodes, in which it is assumed that single perpetrator-states target single population-groups: episodes tend to be part of larger patterns, and involve multiple perpetrator organizations (and not only states) and targets. Second, his work suggests that there is no such thing as a purely ‘domestic’ genocide (curiously, even Armenia and the Holocaust have been described in this way): although genocides often reflect particular national or ‘domestic’ contexts, these are always embedded in international—particularly geopolitical—relations, which are an essential starting-point for research. Third, in locating genocide in international contexts, Bloxham’s work challenges the prevailing method of ‘comparative genocide studies’ which has systematically decontextualized major genocides (de-linking them from the surrounding ‘lesser’ violence which is now foregrounded), leading to the primacy of abstracted, trans-historical comparison (in which the Holocaust is more readily compared to Rwanda than linked to the wider European pattern of genocide). Finally, Bloxham’s approach suggests that accounts which insist on the singularity of particular episodes often represent the influence on scholarship of political narratives (concerning their significance for victim and perpetrator nations). But genocide is too widespread a phenomenon to be identified with particular groups, and scholarship needs to emancipate itself from such agendas.

While Bloxham has not single-handedly established these new parameters, his argument seems tighter than others. Levene, together with Michael Mann, has insisted on the general importance of exclusive nationalism; but Mann, while recognizing the importance of geopolitics, fails to follow through systematically on its significance; while Levene sees genocide as a general danger of the international ‘system’ of nation-states, qualified by the recognition that some states are more dangerous than others. Bloxham’s central insight is that is not so much (or not only) particular states, but particular complexes of geopolitical relations, which are dangerous. Not that, of course, he adopts a geopolitical determinism: in the policies of genocidal regimes, geopolitics is mediated by nationalist ideology and economic interests. The policy of the Ottoman organizers of the Armenian genocide is a good case generally ‘for consideration of violent ethnopolitics in the era of the world wars . . . It illustrates the fusion of geopolitical, ethnic, and economic considerations in strategic design, and the fallacy of any attempt to pinpoint one or other of the three factors as somehow decisive on its own’ (p 78).

In the context of this approach, *The Final Solution* is both Bloxham's most general account of genocide in the era of the world wars, and the book which incorporates Nazi genocide most comprehensively into his narrative. He explains that 'the evolution and dynamics of the final solution are at the centre of the book, but that is to the larger end of asking how and how far the Holocaust fits into broader patterns of the human past' (p 2), for 'even as the most extreme genocide, the murder of the Jews retained some of the shape of other genocides' (p 10). Yet these comments suggest that the centrality of the Holocaust serves more a didactic than an analytical purpose. Empirically, of course, the Holocaust was a culmination not only in a chronological sense, but also as the most systematically murderous genocide. But clearly even this sense of conclusion reflects the contingency of Nazism's defeat in 1945: had it been overthrown earlier, Christopher Browning has suggested, the mass death of Soviet prisoners would have far numerically exceeded that of Jews; had it survived longer—let alone ruled Europe for decades—new excesses may yet have overshadowed the Jewish fate. If I am correct that the Holocaust's centrality serves mainly a didactic purpose, we may ask whether it advances or skews the general case which Bloxham advances. It is understandable, given the self-referential character of Holocaust historiography, that Bloxham should have addressed his book to this theme, but there is a danger that it leaves his general argument struggling to make its mark.

In this argument, Nazism has a dual role: as the exemplar of general trends, and as a specific force playing a particular role in the larger configuration. As to general trends, he echoes Levene's and Mann's direction when he argues that:

... there is something about the very logic of the state in the crisis period under consideration that particularly promoted genocide because of its *dual* benefits to the perpetrating regime. Genocide was one logical expression of the political drive that sought to minimize heterogeneity even among ethnic majorities, changing "peasants into Frenchmen" or Anatolian Sunnis into Turks, by way of creating the critical mass of unified demographic strength necessary for states to establish themselves, and then to repel others or expand. Genocide or ethnic cleansing served the purposes of removing "problem" groups while simultaneously sharpening and rendering more exclusive the identity of the majority. (p 41)

Yet if this kind of ethnic homogenization was a necessary, it was not a sufficient condition of genocide. For Bloxham, expansionist war provides the latter: 'As with other murderous regimes, it was in the course of territorial expansion and military conflict, with Poland, but particularly with the Soviet Union, that [Nazi Germany's] progression occurred from ethnic cleansing to outright genocide' (p 7). Therefore 'however unrelated Nazi antisemitism was to actual power-political relations, the transition to genocide most assuredly did require some genuine interactivity with forces that existed independently of the Nazi worldview' (pp 7–8).

In the latter, excessively tentative, formulation a key analytical argument is buried. Genocide arose not just from the aims and ideologies of the most powerful actors, considered separately, but from their interactions in geopolitics and war. From this perspective, the genocidal policies of Nazi Germany and its allies, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other, which have normally been

considered separately (look at any major text on genocide, Soviet policies—if considered at all—will be treated in a different chapter from Nazi policies and often labelled in a different way), were part of a *system* of interaction. The genocides of particular perpetrator-centres were conditioned by the interactions *between* perpetrator-centres. And yet genocide was only *part* of what these interactions were about: these great world empires—and the lesser nation-states and armed movements who also practised genocide—were simultaneously competing with each other *both* for control over territory *and* to homogenize their territories' populations, removing undesirable peoples. Indeed because genocidal empires and states were competing not only with each other but with others, like the USA and Great Britain, which did not practice genocide themselves (even if they were prepared to condone it on the part of their allies), the larger framework of conflict was only partly about genocide. Thus although there were sometimes 'counter-genocidal' (revenge) elements in the spread of anti-population violence, even the expulsions of Germans after 1945 were as much about the geopolitical goal of confining German power (p 106).

Thus *The Final Solution* shows how fully genocide in 1939–45 was bound up with the war. It rightly accords Nazi Germany a key role in the war's generalization of anti-population violence, noting that 'the recognized radicalizing effects of war were not some purely extrinsic factor, influencing but separate to longer standing perpetrator intent. The very decision to go to war presupposed a radical mindset, particularly in the Nazi regime whose very identity was predicated upon the conflict of nations and races' (p 173). Clearly Germany's allies had similar motives, if more modest ambitions, for participating in the war: Italy, Romania, Hungary and of course the new Nazi-sponsored states of Croatia and Slovakia, all aimed to expand national territories and consolidate the homogeneity of their populations, albeit with very variable degrees of murderousness. Likewise the Soviet Union, which began carving up Poland and removing Poles in 1939–41 in conjunction with Nazi Germany, and completed the process in 1944–45 in alliance with the US and Great Britain: although by this point, of course, the target of its most brutal policies was the German population, in whose pursuit it was joined by Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia. Indeed the governments-in-exile of Czechoslovakia and Poland had developed their own policies to destroy German society within their territories, with the endorsement of the western powers, well before these final pushes. Yet Bloxham gives an incomplete account both of genocide's role in the war (Japan and Asia are thoroughly absent) and of its limits: genocide's 'frustration in places like Denmark and Bulgaria' is given as an example of its 'contingent' character, but the contrast between the eastern and western European zones of German occupation is not fully explored.

Part of the problem is that Bloxham eschews conceptual questions. Despite the importance to his argument of the larger pattern of genocide of which the Armenian and Jewish mass murders were the nadirs, Bloxham spends little time defining genocide or 'ethnic cleansing', using these terms sometimes almost interchangeably, sometimes exclusively, and often in tandem. His usage often implies a distinction between 'cleansing' and what he calls 'outright genocide'

(presumably mass murder). But since the former always involves the destruction of a population's society, culture and institutions, through substantial violence and coercion (even though their forms and extent may vary), it is difficult to distinguish coherently from genocide. Bloxham's deferral to this distinction only loosens his case that 'ethnic cleansing' and mass murder are both expressions of destructive, exclusive-nationalist population politics. (*The Great Game of Genocide* was a superb title; but if its author took his conceptual caution seriously, it should have been *The Great Game of Genocide and Related Anti-Population Violence*.) Likewise, while Bloxham is right not to adopt Levene's over-general case that the modern international 'system' as such is the root cause of genocide, it would be better if he engaged with such theoretical arguments and developed the implications of his own tighter but more limited case for the explanation of genocide in general.

There seem to me to be four important directions which Bloxham's landmark contribution opens up, beyond the new understanding of European genocide. The first concerns the place of this period in the longer modern history of genocide. Here we might start from the limits of genocide, both spatial (why, in 1875–1949, was it mainly a phenomenon of certain sub-regions?) and temporal (why did genocide become more widespread in this period and then more or less disappear in Europe?). Related to this are two questions, both indicated by Bloxham: the links between European genocide in this period and earlier patterns, both within Europe and in colonial genocide; and the links with the subsequent patterns of genocide in the non-western world. As to the latter, the 'precedent of massive population engineering' during the world wars, and 'the idea that the great power constellation might even condone forms of ethnic cleansing that favoured friends or victors' were learned by 'future nationalist leaders such as Israel's David Ben Gurion, and liberals such as the Czech Edvard Beneš' (p 89). They were also learned by many of the new post-colonial leaders, so that while one era of genocide ended in Europe in the late 1940s, another opened up in the 'Third World'.

A second direction concerns whether Europe in its high-genocidal period offers a distinctive model of the perpetration of genocide. Here Bloxham concludes:

Our Europe does provide substantiation for some conceptual half-way house between more demotic and more statist interpretations of intergroup violence. Some of the most vicious incidences of mass murder . . . occurred when established state authority had been destroyed and there was sustained, often multilateral competition for hegemony between groups with aspirations to formal post-conflict influence. . . . Nevertheless, whatever the spiralling violence in these situations of lawlessness, many of the social cleavages which widened to cavernous dimensions had previously been exacerbated by state policy (pp 41–42).

An obvious question is whether, such 'demotic' elements notwithstanding, this Europe represented a highpoint of statist genocide, even if it continued afterwards, particularly in Communist China and Cambodia. Does the pattern elsewhere in the post-colonial world, as work on episodes in India (1946–48), Indonesia (1965), Bangladesh (1971) and other cases suggests, represent a decisive shift away from the level of statism seen in mid-twentieth century Europe, even if elements

of or within states still have important roles? If so, how is this related to the general transformation of power in the late twentieth century world?

A third direction, and perhaps the most important, concerns the applicability of Bloxham's geopolitical approach to extra-European genocide. The influence of the 'mega-genocide', single-perpetrator, single-victim group model, reinforced by victim-group nationalist interpretations and legal conservatism, has led us to see genocide in former Yugoslavia in terms of Serbian violence against Muslims, and in Rwanda in terms of Hutu Power violence against Tutsis. What kind of understanding would result from applying an international-relations geopolitical approach? On the one hand, as with the high-genocidal European period, the multi-directional, interactive character of genocide, intertwined with complex patterns of war, is as evident in other cases. In former Yugoslavia, Croatian, (especially) but also some Bosnian and Kosovo Albanian forces were implicated in genocidal violence, which was intertwined with the war between republican state authorities initiated by Serbian forces. In central Africa, anti-Hutu genocide in Burundi in 1972 and in localized Rwandan Patriotic Front massacres during their invasions of 1990 and 1994, preceded the 1994 genocide of Tutsis, and the RPF victory was the catalyst for the complex wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo that continued into the 2000s, during which many state and non-state actors have committed genocidal massacres and mass rapes. On the other hand, none of the direct protagonists in these cases were great powers or empires; all of them looked over their shoulders at the great powers and the UN, based outside their regions, whose interventions influenced the course of events. And all these actors operated in context of greatly expanded multi-dimensional international surveillance, especially by global media. Bloxham's account suggests the need for comparable examinations of more recent regions of genocide, but his implicit model of European genocide cannot be directly transferred.

Last but not least, Bloxham's work provokes reflection on conceptual, normative and political issues. Perhaps the best reason not to accept the Genocide Convention definition is that it was drawn up by states that had just participated, directly or indirectly, in the widespread genocidal violence that he outlines. They excluded direct explicit mention of forcible population movement, the most common means of 'destroying' societies, from the Convention for the obvious reason that they were themselves complicit in this practice, even during the drafting period, from Germany to India and Palestine. This sobering recognition of the situation of the late 1940s has many lessons for us in the 2010s. 'Preventing and punishing' genocide will not happen without a transformation of the international relations within which it is proposed to carry this out.

OMER BARTOV*

Locating the Holocaust

The historian Donald Bloxham introduces his recent book by stating that it is ‘about perpetrators, perpetration, and the milieux that produced both’. Bloxham’s reasoning for focusing exclusively on the killers is that, ‘those books on Nazi genocide that pride themselves on . . . bringing out the voices of the victims, only tend to do so for select groups, primarily Jews’. Note that Bloxham’s book is entitled *The Final Solution: A Genocide*, not ‘final solutions’ or ‘a history of genocide’. But he appears to fear that the voices of Jewish victims will drown out all other victims. As he puts it, ‘it would be beyond the physical capacity of the book to consider the myriad genocides, ethnic cleansings, and other murders described in these pages from the diverse perspectives of tens of millions of victims of different backgrounds’.

This choice, Bloxham informs us, does not indicate ‘a lack of interest in those victims as human beings’. Rather, the exclusion of Jewish voices from a book about the Final Solution has the moral benefit of facilitating the inclusion of non-Jewish victims of that and other genocides who had been previously excluded. In Bloxham’s words, ‘the intellectual purpose of looking at the full range of people and peoples killed and expelled for political reasons in the broadest sense in and around the Nazi period is complemented by the conviction that recognition of their often undescribed fates is itself a moral statement’ (p 14).

What is the moral content of this statement? That the author will correct a perceived historiographical imbalance, whereby the Jewish victims of the Holocaust have displaced all other victims of genocide? Put differently, the study of the Holocaust—meaning here the specific murder of the Jews—presents an obstacle to a larger understanding of genocide, blocks our moral vision and obstructs our ethical sensibilities vis-à-vis all other victims of human criminality. This, according to Bloxham, is clearly shown by the assertion of the Holocaust’s uniqueness. And, indeed, like any historical event, the Holocaust had both unique features (such as the extermination camps) and features common to many other genocides (such as communal massacres). Similarly, like any traumatic national event, the Holocaust is unique within its national context: to the Jews and to some extent to the Germans, as well as in the view of certain theological and philosophical interpretations. But for historians, the notion of the Holocaust as entirely unique extracts it from the historical context, and converts it into a metaphysical and metahistorical event, a myth and a focus of religious or national identification, thereby sacrificing its status as a concrete episode in the annals of human history.

*Omer Bartov would like to note that his contribution was not written as a review of Donald Bloxham’s book, but rather as an independent article that alluded by way of illustrating a larger issue to some statements in the book. He had agreed to have a much-abridged version of the original essay in the forum upon request of the journal’s editors.

Bloxham himself is somewhat ambivalent on this score. He complains that, 'most other genocides have not been of sufficient interest to western intellectuals for them to ponder their metaphysical dimensions in the way the Holocaust has been pondered'. Yet he also asserts that, 'something of the dimensions of the final solution *should* prompt huge and sustained philosophical self-reflection'. What annoys him, however, is 'the "surprise" that registers in so much of the scholarship . . . since Europe had not only witnessed other genocides, it had inflicted them on its colonial peripheries well before the continent erupted at its own core in the twentieth century'. Of course, this surprise is perfectly understandable: Europeans were shocked by World War I more than by colonial wars because serial killing of each other was more traumatizing to them than killing non-Europeans. By the same token, although Jews were dubious Europeans, their killing was perpetrated in Europe by a 'civilized' European state in a modern, bureaucratic, industrial manner. That was and should have been shocking. But Bloxham concludes that, 'while the claim to uniqueness can be related to Jewish identity politics, it can also be another instance of Western-centrism' and 'a long tradition of the West's attempts to universalize its own values'. Worse still, this leads to 'a demand for universal significance' of the Holocaust, even as 'those very claims to universalism have themselves been at the heart of Europe's violent interaction with the rest of the world' (p 318).

What does this mean? That western claims of universalism—in this case, universalizing the lessons of the Holocaust—are part of a western predilection to see the West as central, relegating the rest of world, not least European crimes in the rest of the world, to a secondary position. Finally, all this is also somehow related to Jewish identity politics, though that relationship is not developed further in Bloxham's book. The built-in contradiction in Bloxham's book is similar to the one he criticizes in Zygmunt Bauman's important work, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, describing it as an 'attempt at contextualizing the Holocaust within broader patterns of human development', even as it 'is still, paradoxically, de facto attributed a special position'.⁸ The Holocaust, then, remains both a puzzle to be solved and an obstacle to understanding; a code that must be deciphered and an opportunity for obfuscation and distraction from other, greater issues; an occasion for moral reckoning and an excuse to avoid it.

Underlying these arguments are several less explicit assumptions. First, that antisemitism did not play a major role in the genocide of the Jews, whether as individual motivation, or as part of a 'cultural code' containing a 'redemptive' potential.⁹ Second, that 'functionalism' can be extended from its German and European context to an imperial-colonial framework. And third, that there is a link between assertions of the Holocaust's centrality and uniqueness and the legitimization of the State of Israel as a colonial entity with its own history of ethnic cleansing and genocidal potential. In writing about 'solving ethnic questions' in Europe and beyond, for instance, Bloxham notes in passing and without any contextualization, that 'the nascent Israeli state forced the dispersal of large numbers of Arabs and went on to deny them the right to return'.¹⁰

Bloxxham has got his history backward. First, other genocides came into public and scholarly view thanks to the emergence of the Holocaust as a major historical event and not despite it. Second, while the notion of crimes against humanity and attempts to define the ‘crime without a name’ of mass murder of ethnic groups certainly predated World War II, the Holocaust was the event that crystallized the most complete definition of genocide and motivated its legal adoption.¹¹ The term has since been applied to many other genocides. Third, even as the term genocide was being coined, crucial differences between colonialism and European genocide were identified.¹² Fourth, it is the focus on contemporary Israeli policies that makes for the argument against overemphasizing the Holocaust, rather than the reverse. Finally, statements by historians of genocide about Zionist ideology and Israeli policies are mostly rhetorical expressions of opinion, not scholarly analyses of the politics and practices of nation-building and ethnic displacement.

Discovering the Holocaust

The public first learned about the camps through reporters and photographers attached to the Allied armies. Reports from such camps as Buchenwald, Bergen Belsen, and Dachau irrevocably associated Nazism with mass killing. These camps filled with Jewish inmates only at the end of the war, when Jewish survivors of extermination and labour camps were sent on death marches to Germany. Even so, early documentaries rarely mentioned Jews at all, thereby dissociating the horrors of Nazism from the fate of the Jews. In the early postwar years, Nazi camps came to represent a crime against all of humanity, even as victims were depicted as nameless wretches.¹³

Specifically Jewish sources on the Holocaust, such as the Oyneg Shabes archives collected in the Warsaw Ghetto, the thousands of testimonies collected by the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, and the hundreds of memorial books compiled by survivors of Jewish communities throughout Europe, have largely been neglected by historians and have only recently received some acknowledgment as historical documents.¹⁴

The single most important source of initial documentation on Nazi crimes was the International Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1945–46. Although the trial was not primarily concerned with the Holocaust, its archives served as the basis for the early histories of the event.¹⁵ These documents, however, reflected the biases of the court and prosecution cases against key defendants. The Tribunal strenuously avoided eyewitness survivor testimony, fearing that such subjective evidence, often from Jews, would further undermine the legitimacy of a court already attacked as meting victors’ justice. This in turn was reflected in the early histories of the Holocaust, not least Raul Hilberg’s influential *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961), which focused almost entirely on the perpetrators.¹⁶

Intensive judicial activity in the first two postwar decades produced more documentation as well as an evolving view of the nature of Nazi crimes. The German

authorities conducted numerous trials first in the occupied western zone, and subsequently in the Federal Republic, especially following the creation of the Central Office for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes in Ludwigsburg in 1958. A series of trials concerning mass murder in Eastern Europe were followed by the highly publicized Frankfurt Auschwitz trial of 1963–65.¹⁷ Excluding the latter, many German trials relied heavily on Jewish eyewitness testimonies. This was also the case of the 1961 Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, the first major public judicial event devoted exclusively to the Holocaust, which provided the single largest public airing of witness accounts of the Jewish experience in the genocide.¹⁸

Studying the Holocaust

Trials of Nazi perpetrators enhanced public awareness of the Holocaust, legitimized its study as an historical event, and channelled public perceptions of the nature of the event. The 1948 United Nations Convention on Genocide, for its part, had a lesser impact on public opinion and early historiography. Defining ‘genocide’ as a crime whose intent is ‘to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such’, the Convention was clearly forged under the shadow of the Holocaust. Yet the historical scholarship was determined largely by judicial proceedings concerned with the specific event of the Holocaust. The study of genocide emerged only several decades later, when the scholarly literature on the Holocaust had already become established.

But establishing this scholarship took a long time. In 1948 Franz Neumann greeted Raul Hilberg’s proposal to write a doctoral dissertation at Columbia on the Final Solution with the curt response: ‘It’s your funeral’.¹⁹ Indeed, Hilberg’s seminal work itself won only very gradual recognition.²⁰ Since the mid-1970s the number of studies of the Holocaust has been greatly increasing; the most influential current works on the Final Solution are, perhaps, by Christopher Browning, Peter Longerich, and Saul Friedländer.²¹

Some recent studies have associated the Holocaust with the Nazi regime’s population policies and plans for colonizing the envisioned vast *Lebensraum* in the east with Germans. Historians such as Götz Aly and Christopher Browning have argued that only the failure of that gigantic *Generalplan Ost*, entailing the subjugation, deportation, and mass murder of the indigenous populations, did the Germans decide to all eradicate the Jews.²² Such interpretations also link the Holocaust with other cases of population policies and ‘ethnic cleansing’ that culminated in genocide.²³

Demographic plans for Eastern Europe do not explain, however, the murder of the Jews of Salonika, Corfu, or Crete, or the establishment of a mobile murder unit for Palestine whose plans were cancelled only because of the defeat at El Alamein.²⁴ This would suggest that the genocide of the Jews constituted a focal point of the regime’s thinking and retained a high priority under all circumstances. Nor was this merely a German–Jewish issue since, as shown in several studies, the Holocaust in Eastern Europe entailed massive participation by the non-Jewish populations.²⁵

Studying genocide

How are these developments in Holocaust research linked to our understanding of genocide more generally? In recent years, a growing number of comparative studies of genocide have tended to employ the Holocaust as a template against which other genocides can be measured and assessed.²⁶ Clearly many of the questions raised about other genocides were guided by existing scholarship on the Final Solution. But the growth in genocide studies was also the outcome of political developments, such as the fall of communism, the mass murders of the 1990s in Rwanda and Bosnia, Eastern Europe's confrontation with a past of ethnic cleansing and collaboration in crimes against humanity, and an international effort to establish legal institutions to confront genocide. But in the present context it may be instructive to examine the sociologist Leo Kuper's book *Genocide*, published in 1981, since this early and incisive study of mass murder predates the rise of both Holocaust scholarship and identity politics.

Kuper's study of genocide is succinct, fearless, and convincing; it dispels all pretentious rhetoric and forms a space for analysis unobstructed by ideological posturing. For Kuper, many genocidal conflicts are 'a phenomenon of the plural or divided society, in which division persists between peoples of different race or ethnic group or religion, who have been brought together in the same political unit'. Here, to his mind, colonization is a major culprit in its role as 'a great creator of plural societies', leading to 'many genocides in the process of decolonization or as an early aftermath' of it, as in the case of Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi, Africans and Arabs in Zanzibar, as well as in Bangladesh and Nigeria.²⁷

Kuper quite clearly distinguishes between these colonization-fuelled genocides and those generated by 'totalitarian political ideologies, of absolute commitment to the remaking of society in conformity with radical specifications, and a rooting out of dissent'.²⁸ Moreover, it was, according to Kuper 'the devastation of peoples by the Nazis which provided the impetus for the formal recognition of genocide as a crime in international law' by the United Nations 1948 Convention on Genocide.²⁹ Already in 1946 the General Assembly resolved that, 'Genocide is a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups, as homicide is the denial of the right to live of individual human beings'. Thus genocide was made 'wholly independent of crimes against peace or of war crimes', as was the case in Nuremberg, clearing the way 'for the protection of racial, religious, political and other groups against genocidal assaults not only by foreign governments but also by their own governments, and not only in times of war but also in times of peace'.³⁰

As we know, in negotiating the final Convention, the term 'political groups' was taken out of the definition of targeted groups, both because of Soviet opposition and because many other governments wished 'to retain an unrestricted freedom to suppress political opposition'.³¹ The term 'cultural genocide' was also excluded, though it was reflected in the references to ethnical groups and forcible transfer of children.³² Genocide was defined as the destruction of a 'group *in whole or in part*, as such', implying the killing of 'substantial' or 'appreciable' numbers of people, 'with a connecting aim' toward destroying the group they

belong to (emphasis in the original).³³ Finally, the Convention stresses an ‘intent to destroy’, which the Nazis had openly expressed, but has proven difficult to document in other cases where governments present their victims as ‘inadvertent’ casualties.³⁴

Kuper clearly identifies a western liberal worldview at the root of criminalizing genocide, even as he recognizes the West’s culpability in internal and colonial mass murder. Because the liberal assumption, in his words, is ‘that massive slaughter of members of one’s own species is repugnant to man ... ideological legitimization is a necessary pre-condition for genocide’. Such ‘ideologies act by shaping a dehumanized image of the victims in the minds of their persecutors’, and their effectiveness depends on prior ‘ideas circulating which encourage the commission of genocide and the mobilizing of murderous mobs and of organized killers’. Hence, Kuper concludes, ‘the danger signal’ of an approaching genocide ‘is when there is official sanction for talking about a minority group in non-human terms’.³⁵

From Kuper’s perspective, this is precisely why ‘the German genocide ... was particularly shocking to Western sensibility and stimulated inquiry into the causes of the regression of “civilized” man to “barbarism”’.³⁶ This regression, he contends, locates ‘the context for exterminatory antisemitism’, in ‘the demonization of the Jews’, thus making for the ‘relationship between ideological dehumanization and genocide’. This kind of genocide asserts a ‘denial of human status’ because it is ‘a crime against a collectivity’, or a group ‘as such’, whereby people are killed without reference to their individual characteristics. And, it constitutes a ‘denial of human individuality and significance’, since it ‘is carried out, not in blind hatred, but in pursuance of some further purpose, the victims being cast in a purely instrumental role’.³⁷ The ‘complete expression’ of this ‘reduction to an object is’, writes Kuper, ‘in the death camps, with the stripping of social identity and the reduction of the victims to numbers’.³⁸ The process of dehumanization is facilitated also by the use of metaphors of disease and degeneration. Hence the Nazi practice of ‘repeatedly analogizing European Jewry to syphilis and to a cancer that must be excised’, and ‘the Nazi metaphor of the Jew as a dangerous bacillus, to be eradicated at all costs’.

These metaphors of deadly danger bring us to Kuper’s second fundamental distinction, ‘between situations in which there is some threat, however slight, to the interests of those who perpetrate or plan or incite massacres, and situations devoid of such threat’. It is of course possible that ‘where the outside observer may see no threat whatever, objectively considered, the actors themselves may feel threatened’. Nevertheless, Kuper insists, ‘one can distinguish between massacres of a weak defenceless hostage group used as a scapegoat, and massacres arising in the course of a conflict in which there is some realistic threat or challenge to the interests of the dominant group in the host society’. The latter, to his mind, is the case in many conflicts over national liberation, regional autonomy, secession, structures of domination, or partition, in other words, political struggles. In ‘genocides against racial, ethnic, and religious groups’ produced by such conflicts, Kuper identifies an ‘inextricable interweaving of political considerations’.³⁹

Conversely, under Nazism 'ideologies of dehumanization of racial, religious, national and ethnic groups received their most systematic formulations as a theory of society, and as a blueprint for political reconstruction and military expansion'. Among groups targeted 'for genocidal massacres' by the Nazis, Kuper identifies in particular Poles, Gypsies, the handicapped, and Jews. Regarding Poland, the German goal was to destroy the elite, incorporate parts of the country, dissolve the state, and enslave the people. The other groups 'were deemed totally expendable'. But the murder of the Gypsies brought no material or political benefits. Conversely, the persecution of the Jews brought with it several advantages: 'Given the wide diffusion of antisemitism, it was a source for support in other countries. Within Germany itself, it functioned as a unifying factor'. Thus what appears as 'the contradictory elements in the stereotype of the Jews', helped increase its appeal to 'many different categories of the German population'. The Jews could be seen as both capitalists and communists, wielding demonic powers yet also being weak, diseased, and degenerate; a mortal threat to existence yet also entirely vulnerable. And, to boot, they presented an excellent opportunity for personal and state enrichment.⁴⁰ In other words, they were objectively no threat whatsoever, but their genocide was exceptionally advantageous from the perspective of the regime and not a few of its citizens and subject populations.

Voices from genocide

Let us now ask again: Does the Holocaust constitute an obstacle to the study of genocide? From what we have seen, the opposite is the case. This terrible explosion of violence in the heart of Europe taught humanity a few lessons, however imperfectly they were implemented. The Holocaust was the main cause for the translation of thinking about mass murder of targeted groups into international law by the UN Convention on Genocide. Scholarship on genocide greatly benefited from research on the Holocaust. Hence debates over the uniqueness or comparability of the Holocaust are evidently almost purely political today.

The Holocaust has served as a focus of identity to many Jewish communities and has also been mobilized for such contradictory purposes as teaching tolerance to non-Jewish populations or legitimizing militant nationalism by Zionists. This use resembles that of many other national traumas. But Holocaust scholarship has by and large stayed away from such rhetoric. That the Holocaust is often used as a shortcut to asserting Jewish identity rather than learning Judaism is lamentable. But it has little to do with the study of or struggle against genocide.

The Holocaust is being used for yet another purpose. By alleging its overwhelming presence in public discourse, a tortuous link is made between the genocide of the Jews and the legitimacy of the State of Israel. Postwar Zionism had claimed that the Holocaust was the best argument for establishing a Jewish State. Now some critics of Holocaust discourse assert that it serves to delegitimize criticism of Israeli policies, even as a motley group of more radical commentators, ranging from various left-wing Europeans, Americans, and even Israelis, to

western neo-Nazi and nationalist and fundamentalist elements in the Arab and Islamic world, have taken to accusing Israel of treating the Palestinians as the Nazis treated the Jews. Such extreme statements from politically engaged circles may perhaps be dismissed as mere propaganda. But the growing chorus of scholarly voices who propose to identify links between what they argue is the colonial nature of the Nazi extermination of the Jews and what they believe is the colonial nature of Zionism and the Jewish State is, to my mind, more troubling. Such arguments tend to come as rhetorical sleight of hand from scholars who have no specialized knowledge of Israel or the Palestinians but wish to express their political opinions; they end up using the Holocaust and the suffering of others for political ends.

Such simplistic analogies and self-serving politicization of historical tragedies could be avoided by paying heed to the voices of the victims. My own research on a single town in Eastern Europe has convinced me that we can learn a great deal about large historical events such as genocide by focusing on their unfolding on the local level. A sustained study of such a site tells us much both about German policy and Jewish responses, and about the complex relations between different ethnic and religious groups under extreme conditions of war and genocide in human societies more generally. In order to gain these insights, however, one must 'listen' to the voices of the protagonists. Writing the history of genocide only from the perspective of the killers, whatever one's intentions, leads to writing a history of atrocity lacking a human face, thereby becoming complicit in the depersonalization, not to say dehumanization of the victims sought by the perpetrators.⁴¹

What are we arguing about? First, I am not convinced that writing about many genocides instead of just one is a moral statement; but I am sure that it precludes empathy. Second, listening to the voices of victims, whatever their identity, is crucial to the kind of empathy that brings with it a modicum of understanding. Third, while the mass murder of the Jews also constituted an element of a larger population policy, it predated and outlasted that policy and was never fully subsumed under it to begin with. The Holocaust should not stand in the way of understanding other genocides; and studies of genocide should not prevent historians from historically reconstructing the mass murder of European Jews. No amount of contextualization and comparison can compensate for a view from below and from within. It is ultimately historically wrong and morally pernicious to try to integrate the Holocaust into the history of colonial genocides and at the same time to fret about its omnipresence. And it is disturbing that the voices of the victims, which their persecutors had striven to silence in order to cover up their crimes, are dismissed by contemporary historians in the name of equity and balance.

From the local perspective, whichever genocide one writes about, we will often encounter the same ethnically and religiously mixed communities, external forces triggering outbursts of communal massacres, and many instances of complicity and rescue, collaboration and resistance. But the witnesses of such events will bring out the uniqueness of their experiences as individuals, as members of communities, of groups, of nations—an individual experience that was denied them by

the killers and that finds no room in the broad sketches of comparative genocide studies and the generalized overview of events. Since the goal of genocide is to destroy groups as such, it behoves the historian to rescue these groups from oblivion, even if only in history and memory. And for that we must listen to the survivors of genocide, not least because invariably they demand to be heard; we must write down their stories and integrate them into the historical picture. We should never again write the history of genocide with the victims left out.

DORIS BERGEN

Challenging uniqueness: decentring and recentring the Holocaust

Donald Bloxham's provocative book is full of twists and surprises. For starters, it is really several short books and essays of varying lengths rolled into one. The first main section, titled 'A European History of Violence', is a jam-packed, synthetic account of European history from about 1875 to 1949, a period Bloxham describes as characterized by 'increasingly violent 'solutions' to ethno-national problems' (p 37). Next comes 'Germany and the Final Solution', a survey of the Third Reich and its programmes of mass violence, distinguished among other things by Bloxham's studious avoidance of the word 'Holocaust', which, in 127 pages, appears only six or seven times, most of them pertaining to the 1944 murder of the Jews of Hungary. Nevertheless, aside from passing references to Romanies, disabled people, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Slovenes in Carinthia and Styria, and slightly longer passages regarding gentile Poles and Soviet POWs, the focus is on the Germans' 'increasingly murderous policies' (p 175) as directed at Jews.

Part III, 'Perpetrators and their Environment', makes a brief foray (forty pages) into the field or discipline of comparative genocide, to analyze the killers. Although Bloxham titled the sole chapter in this section 'Why Did They Kill?' he is more interested in the perpetrators' acts and the dynamic interplay of factors that escalated mass killing than he is in the usual questions of individual motive or official intent. The last and shortest section, 'Civilization and the Holocaust' is a somewhat grandiosely labelled historiographical discussion that moves through the intentionalist-functionalist, 'modernity', and other debates to attack the notion of the Holocaust as 'unique'.

Taken together, these four—apparently disjointed—parts add up to an extended criticism of the claim of the Holocaust's uniqueness, under whatever name it might appear: unprecedentedness, singularity, incomparability, or universal significance. In fact, each of the four main sections of the book might be associated with Bloxham's rejection of one of those concepts. Bloxham aims both to decentre the Holocaust within the study of extreme violence and to provide a model of what such a revised narrative might look like. His efforts have a paradoxical—or perhaps more accurately, a dialectical—result, in that they simultaneously reject and reaffirm the central position in modern history of the Nazi German destruction of Jews. It would, of course, be unthinkable and, given the dearth of scholarship,

perhaps impossible to spend four hundred pages critiquing the particularity of any other case of extreme violence. Here the effort expended draws attention back to the enormity of the Holocaust, as a historic and also historiographic event.

The book's cover displays the tension within Bloxham's position in a vivid way: the iconic view of the rail-lines leading into Auschwitz signals to readers precisely the specificity of the Holocaust—call it uniqueness, if you will—that Bloxham attempts to unsettle. If the Holocaust, as emblemized by Auschwitz, is a self-serving distortion of the past, as Bloxham implies, it nevertheless remains immediately and distinctly recognizable as a symbol both of the historical events Bloxham calls 'the final solution' and of the general concept of 'genocide'. Put differently, here is a book written against the notion of 'the Holocaust' that announces and markets itself using an unmistakable symbol of the Holocaust.⁴²

Bloxham's conceptualization of the uniqueness claim is at once enormously broad and selectively narrow. It encompasses everything from Steven Katz's position of the Holocaust as 'phenomenologically unique' (p 315), to Richard Rubenstein's depiction of the Shoah as a challenge to the idea of Jews as a people chosen by God, to Zygmunt Bauman's conclusion that genocide is a 'legitimate resident in the house of modernity'. Bloxham concedes the latter but hammers what he deems the 'Western-centrism' behind Bauman's contention. In Bloxham's words, 'the fact remains that it took the Holocaust to give force to this truth for him as for many others, when, had "the West" displayed any self-reflection about its capacity for rationalized destruction, this was already plain to see' (p 318).

In Bloxham's analysis, the 'uniqueness claim' is both a product of western imperialism and an expression of 'Jewish identity politics', linked to the need to bolster the state of Israel, or in Bloxham's less direct formulation, 'to give a special significance to the past suffering of Jews in the name of present communal identity' (p 315). In fact, he connects and even conflates these two charges in a formulation that verges on blaming the victim or accusing those who examine the Holocaust 'as lived experience' (p 315) of promoting 'imperialistic tendencies':

We can thus see that, while the claim to uniqueness can be related to Jewish identity politics, it can also be another instance of Western-centrism. It fits into a long tradition of the West's attempts to universalize its own values—and uniqueness in the totalistic sense it is meant must be a demand for universal significance. Those very claims to universalism have themselves been at the heart of Europe's violent interaction with the rest of the world. (p. 318)

With this two-pronged accusation, Bloxham lays a trap in which he can capture a whole array of writings about the Nazi German assault on Jews. After all, any scholarly focus on the Holocaust could be construed as a 'claim to uniqueness'; the decision to research and write about any topic always carries an implication that there is something specific, unusual, and significant about that particular issue or set of events. But in Bloxham's formulation, scholars of the Holocaust are immediately suspect: either they are agents of 'Jewish identity politics' or guilty of 'Western-centrism' or most likely both. What is more, by the logic of

this passage, the claim of universal significance is equivalent to, indeed just another face of, European imperialism, and thereby a partner in imperialism's bloody assaults on 'the rest of the world'. Given Bloxham's openmindedness and his previous publications, it seems unlikely, indeed impossible, that he intended such a sweeping accusation. Still, readers should not need to know an author and his oeuvre in order properly to understand a particular work. Here what may be the result of haste, carelessness, or a flight of rhetoric risks antagonizing Bloxham's audience and undermining the credibility of other parts of his argument.

While he condemns heaps of scholarship as tainted by the blight of 'uniqueness', Bloxham neglects works on the Holocaust that refute or avoid ahistorical claims of singularity. He does admit that among historians 'the uniqueness 'debate' has lost most of its steam' (p 319), and he briefly fingers the 'Holocaust industry' and 'other disciplines' as the new culprits. Still, at least the first two parts of the book are clearly aimed at historians; indeed, it is hard to imagine anyone else persisting through two hundred pages of unrelieved carnage presented at a textbook level of generalization. But I wonder whether most historians of the Holocaust broadly conceived will recognize themselves and one another in Bloxham's depiction. To my reading, the field at present is characterized precisely by an eagerness to situate the Holocaust in its many contexts—as a component of the era of world wars; as part of the genocidal twentieth century; as linked to the concurrent totalitarian systems of National Socialism and Communism; and as a product of national struggles and conflicts about national power and identity. In fact, such contextualization speaks to the maturity of a dynamic field that opens out in every direction.⁴³

This openness is multivalent and productive, and it is not new. For decades Gerhard Weinberg has consistently and insistently urged scholars and everyone else to consider the Holocaust and World War II together.⁴⁴ Weinberg's contextualizing project is by no means the same as Bloxham's—indeed, it goes much farther as a multicausal, multinational analysis—but it hardly fits the accusation of isolating the Holocaust from international history. Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton—historians who pioneered research on Nazi murder of the disabled and of Roma and Sinti—are missing from Bloxham's account.⁴⁵ Instrumental in seeing those victim groups represented in the permanent exhibit of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, Friedlander and Milton do not fit a simplistic equation of the term 'Holocaust' with Jewish victims and supposed Jewish interests.

Nor can Helen Fein, Omer Bartov, Robert Melson, Robert Gellately, or Dan Stone be charged with failing to place the Holocaust in the context of other genocides. Bartov, Gellately, and Stone appear in Bloxham's bibliography, but only as authors and editors of books focused on the Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. Their influential contributions to comparative and connective studies do not feature,⁴⁶ and Fein and Melson are nowhere to be seen.⁴⁷ Even more obvious is the absence of Ben Kiernan's weighty tome, *Blood and Soil*, a study of extermination since the destruction of Sparta that arguably does precisely what Bloxham

advocates and without the baggage of being a scholar of ‘the West’.⁴⁸ One cannot expect Bloxham to have noticed, but even the ‘dean’ of scholars of the Holocaust, Raul Hilberg, explicitly rejected the claim of uniqueness. As Christopher Browning points out, in the third edition of *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Hilberg admitted that the Holocaust had lost its singularity. With the 1994 genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda, he concluded, ‘History has repeated itself’.⁴⁹

Bloxham underestimates the profound transformation that has resulted from contextualizing the Holocaust within eastern European history. Over the past two decades, in very different ways and from divergent perspectives, a host of scholars—Zvi Gitelman, Jan Gross, Wendy Lower, Omer Bartov, John-Paul Himka, Jeffrey Kopstein, Timothy Snyder, and others—have revealed connections between Stalin’s and Hitler’s regimes of terror at the time they existed and in subsequent history and memory.⁵⁰ Twenty-five years after the historians’ debate, it is now possible to study these tyrannies together on the basis of archival records and eyewitness accounts and without falling into old Cold War postures or setting up competitions in suffering. Some of the relevant scholars appear in Bloxham’s notes and bibliography, others do not, but the combined impact of their contributions is ignored in his portrayal of the field.

Bloxham devotes surprisingly little space to the concrete ways that Nazism and Communism ended up reinforcing and exacerbating one another’s brutal impacts. He barely mentions the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact and pays scant attention to the dynamics of dual occupation and serial collaboration. Instead he refers repeatedly to the widespread belief in Judeo-Bolshevism as a way to explain violence against Jews. This is an important point, but it seems overplayed here. If, as Bloxham suggests, the ‘Bolshevik’ side of this equation were dominant in the minds of most German gentiles, they would have responded with outrage to the 1939 pact with the Communist ‘devil’. However, in many years of research on the German churches, often assumed to have been motivated to accept Nazism by their fervent anti-Communism, I have yet to find expressions of protest or even disappointment to Hitler’s embrace of Stalin.

One of the biggest surprises in Bloxham’s book for me was my own response. I started reading certain that I would learn from him and expecting to agree with most of his arguments. Over the past twenty years, I have benefited tremendously from publications, conferences, and personal encounters that elucidate cases of extreme violence, whether or not they are compared or connected to the Holocaust. And certainly, whatever one might think of Bloxham’s overall project, there is much to learn from this ambitious work. The first section is particularly valuable in the attention it pays to south-eastern Europe, a region Bloxham shows was not peripheral but key throughout the period he examines. The Balkans, ‘small states’, and contested territories where the ‘shatterzones’ of three collapsing empires—the Ottoman, Russian, and Habsburg—competed and converged, merit much more attention than they receive in most studies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some of the valuable work that does exist is absent from Bloxham’s notes and bibliography, notably publications by Holly

Case, Yeshayahu A. Jelinek, and Diana Dumitru, all of which would have supported but also complicated Bloxham's position.⁵¹

I also appreciated Bloxham's integration of the Ottoman lands and Turkey into his analysis, not surprising given his previous books, *The Great Game of Genocide* and *Genocide, the World Wars, and the Unweaving of Europe*,⁵² but unusual for a study with the focus here. Some readers will no doubt discover in this book for the first time the genocide of Assyrians along with Armenians in 1915 (pp 75–78). Also welcome is Bloxham's attentiveness to Christian violence against Muslims in the first half of the twentieth century,⁵³ although he does not fully substantiate the equation he presents in the introduction: 'In the first half of the century the newly politicized Muslim–Christian and Christian–Jewish dynamics proved the most extensively murderous even in this greater maelstrom of political violence' (p 4). Bloxham's long chronological view, incorporating the last quarter of the nineteenth century into study of a topic that too often is discussed as if it emerged from nowhere in 1900, is valuable and significant, as is his multi-causal approach. For a North American reader, the awareness of Britain and the British role in international dynamics around violence is another helpful corrective.

Bloxham's book is rich in insights as well as information. His analysis of the mutually reinforcing relationship between antisemitism and Nazi power is masterful, as is his understanding of the way the Nazi system blended intense drive with normal political behaviour. Using the case of Hutu killers in Rwanda, he explains how hatred can be as much a result as a cause of mass killing, an observation that up-ends familiar assumptions about the links between ideology and violence.⁵⁴ He is erudite, articulate, and bold, and he draws attention to a number of troubling potentials within Holocaust Studies—instrumentalization, sensationalization, oversimplification—while reminding us that scholars too are susceptible to trends.

So why focus on the book's flaws? Admittedly the style can be off-putting, with its breathless, almost telegraphic rush from one massacre to another in the first two parts and its didactic tone in sections III and IV. Passive voice abounds, and individual actors disappear beneath the weight of states, institutions, processes, and power plays. The quadripartite organization (plus the disconnected opening examination of selected primary sources) lends itself to repetition, and at times Bloxham is insufficiently respectful of chronology. There are some distracting errors and myths repeated as fact. Semion Lyandres years ago disproved the simple assumption that 'German gold' funded the Bolsheviks (p 80),⁵⁵ and the tens of thousands of Jews murdered during the tenure of the Lithuanian Provisional Government from June to August 1941 belie Bloxham's assertion that 'the puppet civilian Lithuanian 'Provisional Government' installed by Germany generally supported 'only' classic measures of ethnic dominance against Jews—expropriation and segregation—rather than destruction' (p 127).⁵⁶ The phrases 'ethnic dominance', 'ethnic destruction', and 'ethnic cleansing' recur so frequently that they begin to stand in for historical analysis rather than further it. Bloxham does not appear to have incorporated the recent scholarship on ethnic indeterminacy, 'national indifference', chameleons, and other people who

complicate the neat, if bloodied, categories of ‘ethnicity’ and ‘race’.⁵⁷ Still, everyone makes mistakes, and no one can read everything, and an author as prolific and wide-ranging as Bloxham is perhaps too easily targeted with criticisms of this sort.

I think my dissatisfaction with Bloxham’s book has two deeper roots. One of them is what feels to me like his drive to flog the dead horse of ‘uniqueness’. Why does it seem so crucial to Bloxham to mount this attack now, when even the most outspoken proponents of the Holocaust as ‘uniquely unique’ have proven open to comparisons in surprising ways? I am thinking in particular of Elie Wiesel’s 1993 call to then US president Bill Clinton to intervene against genocide in Bosnia and Yehuda Bauer’s well-known activism on behalf of the victims of genocidal violence in Darfur.⁵⁸ Whether or not one shares the positions they espouse, their words and actions reveal a more complex and sophisticated landscape of Holocaust study and commemoration than Bloxham allows.⁵⁹

A second issue has to do with the focus of the book. Bloxham describes it as ‘a book about perpetrators, perpetration, and the milieux that produce both’. He warns readers not to expect much ‘about the numerous victim groups themselves’, and he delivers on that promise (p 14). As we scholars so often do, he points to the limitations of space to explain his decision: ‘It would be beyond the physical capacity of the book to consider the myriad genocides, ethnic cleansings, and other murders described in these pages from the diverse perspectives of tens of millions of victims of different backgrounds’ (p 14). And yet there is space in these four hundred pages for many names—of heads of state, killers, bureaucrats, and also scholars. Not all of the possible perspectives of people in these categories are represented, but Bloxham knows how to talk about them, to generalize and analyze on the basis of what they have left behind them.

The biggest challenge facing scholars of the Holocaust and of every case of extreme violence is how to develop methods to talk about the people on the receiving end of persecution and abuse. Saul Friedländer calls his effort to do so an ‘integrated history’, which Bloxham in turn dismisses as only bringing out the voices of ‘select groups, primarily Jews’, (p 14) even as he praises the work in a footnote as ‘superb’. Friedländer’s approach is imperfect but it makes two demands that may be essential to the future of genocide studies. First, it calls on us to listen to victims in order to understand victimization. This injunction is more than an effort to be politically correct or put a human face on the past. Friedländer contends, and I agree, that a history that incorporates perspectives and sources from the victims and targets of genocide opens the way to a deeper understanding of what extremely violent systems are and how they function. Whether a scholar’s driving motivation is to try to prevent or represent genocide, understanding is essential.

The second of Friedländer’s criteria gets at the heart of what study of the Holocaust—and all genocides—is or can be. He insists on a mode of scholarship that can be practiced by anyone, that aspires to transcend or at least sidestep political agendas and identity politics. In Friedländer’s words: ‘All historians dealing with this theme’ have to ‘be aware of their unavoidably subjective approach’, and all can ‘muster enough self-critical insight to restrain this subjectivity’ (emphasis in the original).⁶⁰

DONALD BLOXHAM**Response—Discussing genocide: two moralities and some obstacles**

I am grateful to the journal's editors for organising this review forum, and to the reviewers for their contributions. The reviews divide equally between more positive and more negative accounts, but the varying tone and content cannot be explained entirely by divergent interest and expertise. They tell a story of unresolved tensions between parts of Holocaust studies and parts of genocide studies.⁶¹

The more negative reviews focus on aspects of specific historiographical discussions. Bartov's critique of a four-hundred-page volume revolves around one paragraph from its introduction (on morality), one paragraph from its concluding chapter (on Eurocentrism), and one sentence from somewhere in the middle (on Israel-Palestine). These items are given a unity by political allegations that do not bear scrutiny. Bergen's is more engaged, and she makes some important points, but her critique remains primarily historiographical. She portrays my contribution as largely redundant in light of the supposed pluralism of Holocaust studies, and casts aspersions on my motives in criticising parts of the field. Since neither she nor Bartov actually represent or address my main substantive historical arguments about the extent to which the Holocaust fits wider patterns of genocidal violence in its inception, expansion and contraction, those theses are left intact.

The other reviewers fill the vacuum and reach markedly different conclusions. Of the four, the best versed in the dynamics of the Nazi machinery of destruction is Matthäus, who testifies that I provide 'as precise and insightful a comparative framework for better understanding genocide in general and the Holocaust in particular as can be constructed based on the study of primary sources and cutting-edge scholarship'. The international relations expert and comparative genocide scholar Shaw describes the book as part of my 'field-reshaping', 'landmark contribution' to genocide studies. Furthermore, the international historian Mark Mazower (cited by Matthäus) applauds it as providing a 'fruitful way of rescuing the [study of the] Holocaust from encyclopaedism, on the one hand, and localism on the other'.⁶²

In light of this great variation I am tempted to close now and refer readers directly to the book. That said, I do not lightly dismiss my critics. One matter they both raise—the morality-victim testimony issue—is very important, and while I stand by my reasoning, I welcome the opportunity to bring out the underlying assumptions more clearly. Engaging them on other points will involve playing one off to some extent against the other, showing that Bartov's account embodies some of the very historiographical tensions that Bergen proclaims no longer exist. First, though, I will recapitulate what my book attempted methodologically, in the hope that that will draw readers into the book's actual historical arguments, which take up the vast majority of the volume. It is frustrating that I cannot spend more time elaborating those arguments here.

Comparison and contextualization

Had Bartov read my book thoroughly he would realize that he has no justification for his ‘corrective’ assertion that ‘while the mass murder of the Jews also constituted an element of a larger population policy, it predated and outlasted that policy and was never fully subsumed under it to begin with’. This sentence, twinned with his claim that I argue that ‘antisemitism did not play a major role in the genocide of the Jews’, reveals an underlying anxiety in his essay about the specificity of the Holocaust being ignored.

Conversely, Shaw the social scientist believes that I was—or should have been—trying to write a general history of genocide in the period. He is concerned that ‘the Holocaust’s centrality’ in my book may skew the general case he perceives I am trying to make. His concern is something like the opposite of Bartov’s fear.

Shaw is correct in his speculated explanation for my choice of focussing primarily on the Holocaust—compensating for ‘the self-referential character of Holocaust historiography’—but only in part. The other part is that comparative genocide scholarship has not integrated the Holocaust well, owing to imbalances in the scale and detail of Holocaust scholarship vis-à-vis that of other genocides, and owing also to some undoubtedly peculiar features of the Holocaust. I hoped to address both sides of the intellectual issue.

In order to best deploy the historian’s sensitivity to context and process, general patterns and specific variations, I focused primarily on contextualizing the Holocaust within a large but delimited spatiotemporal ‘Raum’ of growing and often connected violence. That ‘space’ was a ‘greater Europe’ from c.1875–c.1949 which of course for a while included the ‘Third Reich’ and its conquered territories. The space evinced transnational geopolitical, ethnopolitical and straightforwardly political patterns which become compelling on closer inspection. I will quote from my introduction:

Much of this volume concentrates on a limited period and place for reasons of scale and practicality, but also to enhance its explanatory value. The focus on one transnational region shaped by varying but related and intersecting political cultures and national histories permits more detailed, useful comparison of when and why genocide occurs, when and why it does not, and where and why certain groups are victimized more or less than others. The aim is to go beyond the simple comparative history of different genocidal phenomena ... and to look at interrelations between cases of genocide and the polities that perpetrate genocide.

I also used a more traditional, direct comparative method in the part of my book on perpetrators and their motivation (Part III), based on the following rationale:

The regional approach is not, however, as helpful in explaining the *internal* dynamics of mass murder—its organisation, the varying motivations of its perpetrators, and even its scale and intensity. As some of the insights of social psychology, political science, and sociology suggest about the comparative study of humans in social and political structures, not all aspects of genocide are equally conditioned by particular cultural or ideological factors, ... Atrocities committed by states, for instance, will share some characteristics with atrocities

committed by other states, irrespective of when and where, because of the way states exercise organisational powers, secure legitimacy, and implement the means of coercion. Atrocities committed by large numbers of people working together will have some shared characteristics wherever and whenever committed, by dint of commonalities in individual behaviour in social situations and under the influence of social and political power. (pp 11–12)

With its complementary contextual and comparative approaches to the Holocaust, the book could be read as an historian's detailed preparation of a patch of historical ground for social scientists to expand and refine their broader comparative and theoretical generalizations. As I wrote on the first page of the introduction, 'the genocide of the Jews had both specific and more general characteristics. In order not to lose sight of its specific features, *the evolution and dynamics of the final solution are at the centre of the book*, but that is to the larger end of asking how and *how far* the Holocaust fits into broader patterns of the human past'.⁶³ Within my greater European 'space' I sought to be as comprehensive as possible in terms of the coverage of incidents of genocide, ethnic cleansing and related violence, since such coverage was vital to the establishment of the evolving patterns. Given the analytical prioritization of certain aspects inevitable in any work of interpretation with a specific object, however, I had to establish a contestable balance of what issues and episodes to foreground and elaborate, and therefore what to deploy more in the manner of context or briefer summary. Because she misses the point about the role of the Holocaust in my book, Bergen thinks she has identified a paradox in the work. She writes that (a) 'the effort [I have] expended draws attention back to the enormity of the Holocaust, as a historic and also historiographic event' despite my alleged attempts to (b) 'decentre the Holocaust within the study of extreme violence'. Had I been attempting (b), then she would be correct that end (a) would have been a paradoxical outcome, but since I was not, it is not. To repeat, the motivation for writing was to apply insights gleaned from thinking about wider patterns of genocide to the comprehension of the Holocaust, and in turn to help bring the Holocaust more systematically than hitherto into a wider history of genocide—I also hoped in the process to bridge some of the gaps between Holocaust studies and genocide studies and thereby enrich both. This was an unusual task for the aforementioned historiographical reasons, but also for reasons highlighted by Bergen's value-laden terminology: I was writing in the hope that concepts like 'centring' and 'decentring' would ultimately be transcended, because they are inherently problematic, presenting obstacles to proper comparative study.

Though Bergen uses it as if every reader should understand what it means, 'decentre' is not a neutral analytical term but has strong, contestable normative connotations, not just for the Holocaust but for all other cases of extreme violence. It presupposes that the Holocaust is already at (and should be at?) the centre of a monolithic discourse on extreme violence. The obvious question that then arises for the reflective, self-critical scholar is: What happens to those instances of violence that are not 'centred'? Remember that the opposite of the centre is the margin.

The idea of the Holocaust's 'uniqueness' is equally distorting for comparative scholarship, and for similar reasons. Since it is also a much better known concept, and one that remains influential (see below), I could not avoid tackling it in a book that sought to help integrate the Holocaust more extensively in the study of genocide. Bergen is wrong, however, in thinking that 'uniqueness' is a guiding obsession of mine. It is another historiographical obstruction to analysis that had to be engaged properly before being sidelined in the service of my essentially methodological and *historical* ends. My discussions of uniqueness in the book amount to about six pages of content, four of which are in my historiographical chapter.

Two moralities in context

To thirteen introductory pages of academic justification for my comparative aims I added the following sentence:

... the intellectual purpose of looking at the full range of people and peoples killed and expelled for political reasons in the broadest sense in and around the Nazi period is complemented by the conviction that recognition of their often undescribed fates is itself a moral statement.

Bartov begins by inquiring about the moral content of that sentence. His moralistic conclusion is that it has no moral content, and also that I am in moral error for looking not at the victims' experiences of the Holocaust, but only at the policies leading to their deaths. His concluding sentence uses the highly invested 'never again' in reference to works that do not address victims' voices. Bergen is in agreement on the second point. I disagree on both, though not unqualifiedly.

I have just called Bartov's language moralistic, which I would contrast with a language of moral debate. By 'moralistic', I mean the belief that there is only one definitive moral perspective, irrespective of context. The outer moral parameter that the *Historikerstreit* clarified was that, while the Holocaust is no more exempt from perspectival re-framing than any other historical occurrence, any exercises in re-framing it should be attempts to add or qualify explanatory dimensions rather than to mitigate or excuse. But assuming the given approach does not transgress that parameter, the morality of any historical discussion cannot be considered in isolation from the intellectual case being made.

Bartov's argument about the importance of heeding victims' voices has been most persuasively made by Saul Friedländer. I cite Friedländer in an endnote attached to an earlier part of the paragraph in which my aforementioned sentence appears. In broad terms, Friedländer's argument is that listening to the victims' voices is a way of breaking through the totality of perpetrator ideology, preventing the perpetrators from providing *the* abiding representation of the victims. I regard Friedländer's work as superb—and said so in the note. Furthermore, I co-authored a book with Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust: Critical Historical Approaches*,⁶⁴ in which we gave extensive consideration to survivor testimony, while my *Genocide on Trial: War Crimes Trials and the Formation of Holocaust History and Memory* was significantly concerned with the problems of excluding survivor testimony.⁶⁵

So I am not criticizing Friedländer's philosophical approach on moral grounds. What I am doing, however, is arguing that his is not the only morally acceptable mode of discourse on genocide, though his arguments have achieved near-canonical status in parts of Holocaust studies. Friedländer called for an 'integrated history' of the Holocaust, and has provided a very fine example of it, provided we accept that integration means bringing together the history of the perpetrators and the victims—and it is a matter of fact that in his account the victims are largely restricted to Jewish victims, as I and others like Daniel J. Goldhagen have pointed out.⁶⁶

But in the same way that it is impossible to write the total history of anything, it is impossible to exhaust all avenues of integration, and certainly to do so under any one scheme of description. Other potential axes of integration include: that providing a fully gendered account of the Holocaust; those comprehensively interweaving the policies against all Nazi victim groups, or addressing the experiences of Jewish victims alongside those of all other victim groups; or those integrating the Holocaust with the life and crimes of 'Germany', 'fascism', 'racism', 'colonialism', 'radical nationalism', 'totalitarianism', and so on. Each of these forms of integration brings different intellectual costs and benefits as well as different discursive inclusions and exclusions, and each will need to be conducted differently because each has a different analytical thrust. I have outlined the approaches by which I sought to smooth the way to deeper comparative and theoretical study including the Holocaust, particularly my attempt to integrate the murder of the Jews into a modern European history of genocidal violence. Bartov assumes that I was claiming that my approach was the *only* correct approach, which would not make sense in light of what I have just said, and in light of my own work on the representation of victims. Conversely, Bartov's concluding sentences suggest he does think there is only one morally correct mode of discourse for the study of instances of genocide, so he makes of his own position an absolute moral yardstick.

Such absolute moral yardsticks are unlikely to endure (except insofar as they denote very broad parameters, as noted in relation to the *Historikerstreit*), not only because different observers read historical events differently, but also because we write in changing historiographical and contemporary cultural contexts. How things change is illustrated by an example from the early 1990s, when some German historians were chastised for focusing on the local history of Jewish victim communities, on the grounds that they were abrogating the responsibility of addressing the perpetrators!⁶⁷ I wrote in the light of what a great number of Holocaust and genocide scholars have written across time, and in light of what I take to be cultural 'commonsense' and its limitations in regard of the Holocaust and other genocides, as enshrined for instance in museums and memorial days.⁶⁸ No individual book stands alone, but exists within these sorts of contexts. It is not, as Bartov fears, a matter of *either* comparative history *or* local history *or* history of the victims' experiences, unless one views every individual book as a zero-sum game in representation and expects each book to adhere to identical discursive conventions. It is a matter of writing in awareness of a general balance of representations.

I also write today in a different tradition from Friedländer and Bartov, one that could broadly be described as genocide studies. Now an important sub-disciplinary contextual backdrop to Friedländer's position was a historiography of Nazi Germany that seemed to have become overly pre-occupied with the workings of perpetrator institutions, and a dry 'functionalist' analysis, at the expense of examining ideology and what was actually done—and to whom—in the name of that ideology. His corrective was one of the most significant statements in a strand of historiography concerned with the *morality of representation* and the integrity of the historical memory of the Holocaust. I would juxtapose that strand with one characteristic of, though not the sole preserve of, genocide studies: that concerning the *morality of prevention*. Neither the representational nor the preventionist strand is intrinsically more important, and in an ideal world they would be mutually supportive. But there is not always a synergy, as I shall illustrate below. To forestall misunderstandings about politicization, I stress that preventionism can only find effective expression as a result of the highest quality academic work. Preventionism is important here in illustrating that genocide studies has never lost its moral compass in the way some of the aforementioned institutional history allegedly had done.

Genocide studies has always been concerned, as the title of the UN convention suggests, with the prevention and punishment of genocide, and therefore with perpetration and perpetrator motivation, and by-standing and intervention. The rationale is that the perpetrators and bystanders are the ones who make genocide happen, or allow it to happen. One of the central methodologies of this scholarship has been comparison of genocide at the level of perpetration. In tandem with the basic intellectual rationale of comparison as a mode of integration like others (namely that it sheds light on the comparators that will not be cast on them if they are examined on their own), there is a moral-cum-political justification which is the establishment of patterns in the interests of prediction and, in ultimate ambition, prevention. In this connection, as Matthäus puts it, 'insisting on the singularity of the "final solution" by ignoring its linkages with broader phenomena in world history . . . reduces the ubiquitous demand "to learn from the past" to an empty platitude'. There are different ways in which such linkages can be established, and mine was to focus on the macro and meso-level of patterns and structures of perpetration. Given the variety of approaches to the issues, I simply cannot agree with Bergen's assertion that the 'biggest challenge facing scholars of the Holocaust and of every case of extreme violence is how to develop methods to talk about the people on the receiving end of persecution and abuse'. Ethically important though it is, this challenge is not automatically more pressing than understanding the perpetrators.

Moving away from the issue of representing the victims of extreme violence, the preventionist philosophy and methodology provide one justification for (as Bartov puts it) 'writing about many genocides instead of just one'. In the present context, that means relating the Holocaust to a wider history of genocide in a mutually informative way. Bergen and Bartov do not think that there are any problems in that relationship as it now stands, and produce somewhat selective

accounts of a happy union of Holocaust and genocide studies. I would like to subdivide the historiography they have homogenized.

I have noted in print the role of a more advanced Holocaust scholarship in highlighting fruitful avenues of research for genocide studies, and the role of some scholars who were stimulated by the Holocaust in pioneering the study of other genocides.⁶⁹ I think it self-evident that Holocaust awareness can lead to a concern with contemporary genocide, which shows that representational and preventionist imperatives need not be in tension. But that is not the whole story, for Holocaust historiography can be ‘self-referential’, as Shaw says. For instance, it has often omitted the murder of non-Jewish groups. Naturally, there are exceptions to that generalization in a huge field, and Bergen lists some. Her own excellent book *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (2003) deals descriptively with the range of Nazi persecutory policies, and engages with victim experiences from a number of groups, though not all and in different proportions. However, I am not alone in my perception of the overall state of the field; in the recent words of the Holocaust historian and comparativist, Christian Gerlach, the ‘prevalent focus of research on the destruction of the Jews has overshadowed the fate of other groups’. His *Extremely Violent Societies* is written in implicit critique of the ‘many scholars [who] insist on strictly distinguishing between the different phenomena of violence’, and who emphasize ‘uniqueness or incomparability’. (He also rightly states that such claims are not the sole preserve of Holocaust scholarship.)⁷⁰ Given the large number of Holocaust scholars relative to scholars of other Nazi genocides, and given the proximity of their interests and expertise, Holocaust studies bears a particular responsibility to address these exclusions now and in the future—put more positively, Holocaust studies can play a particularly important role in the much-needed integration of those areas. Again, the matter of inclusion/exclusion runs together with the issue of explanation: one of Gerlach’s points is that examining the fate of other groups will help illuminate the Holocaust too, since there were causal and ideological interrelationships between different Nazi genocides, perpetrators moved freely between them, and killings of members of different groups often happened in similar immediate contexts and places.

It is impossible, furthermore, to draw a neat discursive line around all the genocides perpetrated by Nazi Germany, which brings me to my book’s broad contextual point about interconnected patterns of modern history in the ‘greater Europe’ mentioned above, and to another illustration of the benefits of comparative study. After all, even if one focuses upon the murder of the European Jews alone one is already a tacit comparativist, because the Holocaust was in significant ways a composite of multiple genocidal tendencies. For instance, the Romanian Jews were killed predominantly on the initiative of the Romanian state. The Croatian Ustasha regime murdered many Jews on its own account. Germany’s murder of the Slovakian Jews was less a matter of Germany imposing its will on the Tiso regime than facilitating the ‘removal’ of an unwanted population by deportation. To understand the multinational nature of perpetration, we need to explain why so many states and peoples turned on their ‘inner enemies’ at this point. That, again,

unfolds into a larger discussion of the politics of nationality, as the peoples of eastern, south-eastern and east-central Europe tried to force their way to nation-state status out of the hulks of the collapsed Romanov, Habsburg and Ottoman empires, and reconfigure ‘their’ part of the political space of half a continent—the same space in which the Nazi eastern empire was constructed and in which the majority of its victims were killed. In these states and proto-states, massacre and expulsion during war occurred pursuant to the quest for ethnic majoritarianism or exclusivity and the ‘nationalization’ of economies. Jews were particular targets of these developments in many places, but were not alone. In different measures Slovakia, Croatia, Romania and Hungary murdered or deported for murder Roma as well as Jews, just as did Germany. Ustasha anti-Serb violence was more extensive than anti-Jewish violence; Ukrainian nationalist participation in the Holocaust under German auspices cannot really be understood outside the context of an ethnic struggle involving Poles too; and so on. Explaining such murderous *conjunctions* was one of my central aims, as Shaw observes, and it involved depicting the Holocaust as a not completely discrete episode in a wider and longer European process of violent flux.

In light of these discussions, it is important to note that the cumulative *effect* of much that has been written and said about the Holocaust in relation to all other genocides is to erect a conceptual barrier to integrated study by the creation of a tacit hierarchy of genocides. For substantiation of this implicit hierarchization, I refer the reader to A. Dirk Moses’ seminal article on the subject.⁷¹ The hierarchy has traditionally been implied most clearly, though not exclusively, in the claim that the Holocaust is ‘unique’—it is also implied, whether or not intentionally, in the language of centring/decentring. By ‘unique’ is meant not the mundane uniqueness of every historical event, but a special quality whereby the particular characteristics of the Holocaust are promoted, without philosophical justification, above its commonalities with other genocides, and whereby comparative studies is distorted as an intellectual pursuit. (The most frequently invoked historical characteristic upon which the edifice of uniqueness is constructed is the totalistic, utopian quality of the driving ideology of antisemitism, which demanded the murder of Jews everywhere simply because they were Jews.) Bergen mistakes that special uniqueness for the mundane sort, as she wrongly suggests that I think all scholars of the Holocaust are ‘immediately suspect’ by virtue of their decision to write on that topic rather than any other. Ignoring what is special about the claim of the Holocaust’s uniqueness, she states that ‘the decision to research and write about any topic always carries an implication that there is something specific, unusual, and significant about that particular issue or set of events’. That observation is correct, but irrelevant to the discussion of uniqueness in the sense meant.

I underline that I am talking about hierarchization as the ‘cumulative effect’ of scholarly activity rather than the ‘intent’. Some of the hierarchizing may have been deliberate, but much—certainly much more—has not. Beyond the matter of implicit hierarchization, however, there are real political implications to over-promoting distinctions between Nazi antisemitism and the ideologies guiding other genocides. Here the preventionist strand of Holocaust-genocide

studies finds itself at loggerheads with the representational strand with its emphasis on historical specificity and fine differentiation. It is the real or perceived differences between the Holocaust and other cases of mass murder at the level of motivation that has allowed leading lights of the international community to legitimate non-intervention in cases like East Pakistan, Rwanda, and Yugoslavia in the first instance, on the basis that they are manifestations not of some unilateral, utopian desire to exterminate but the result of bilateral ‘tribal atavism’ and the like. I simplify, but the point stands. Analogous ‘civil war’ argumentation is also seized upon by the government of Turkey and some non-Turkish historians in justification of its refusal to recognize the Armenian case as genocide, and by Sudan in the Darfur case. In other words, the admirable current institutionalized sensitivity to the Holocaust at the national and international memorial level contrasts with institutional responses to other modern genocides; institutionalization entails a certain depoliticization, a strict delineation of commemorative and preventionist responses—as if genocide and responses to it could ever be anything other than radically political. Part of the depoliticization stems from the Holocaust’s being ‘safely’ in the past; when it was occurring the attitude of the US and the UK at least was tellingly different. But another reason is that the Holocaust has been conceptually hived-off from other more ‘controversial’ forms of genocide.⁷²

The endurance of ‘uniqueness’

Less ink is certainly spilled these days than a few decades ago on uniqueness, and I said as much in my book. There remains, however, sufficient explicit interest for Alan S. Rosenbaum’s *Is the Holocaust Unique?* to have gone into its third edition in December 2008. More importantly, the dying down of the ‘debate’ does not mean that ‘uniqueness’ has disappeared so much as that it has entered the doxa of parts of Holocaust studies and the public sphere. Many scholars of other genocides certainly still live under the sign of uniqueness by contesting or just resenting it, or—misguidedly—attempting to make ‘their’ genocides look exactly ‘like’ the Holocaust in order to gain the attention or even basic recognition that many of them still lack.⁷³ It is, after all, a conversation into which they have been drawn by the very fact that the claim was made in the first place and has not been rescinded.

Again, there is limited value in Bergen’s listing of scholars who have considered the Holocaust in a comparative framework, or opposed the idea of uniqueness. Only if I had claimed that all Holocaust scholars adopted an identical stance would her rebuttal have hit its mark. In attempting to force her case, however, she includes some examples that do not work straightforwardly and others that do not work at all: Ben Kiernan and Norman Naimark are not Holocaust historians, so are irrelevant to a discussion about the inclusivity of Holocaust studies; Robert Melson had his comparative interests in place before working academically on the Holocaust, rather than vice versa;⁷⁴ Helen Fein had also worked on other atrocities prior to bringing her comparative perspective to bear on the Holocaust;⁷⁵ Raul Hilberg, whatever his central import to the scholarship of the ‘final solution’,

remained something of an outsider, and his scholarly stance was formed before ‘uniqueness’ gained popularity; Bartov I shall consider shortly.

All that is necessary for my point to be valid is that uniqueness continues to be one important strand in influencing thought about the Holocaust, and for that I could refer to all the still-influential scholars who I mention in the uniqueness pages in my book. I could also observe that some of the very people Bergen cites are themselves conscious of the same tendencies I am, or have been criticized for their positions as a result of those tendencies, so to set them against me makes little sense. Timothy Snyder’s *Bloodlands* has been attacked for ‘*distract[ing] attention* from what was unique about the extermination of the Jews’.⁷⁶ Dan Stone, who Bergen rightly invokes as a comparativist, shares Gerlach’s and my perception about ongoing misgivings within Holocaust studies towards particular forms of contextualization. In December 2010, Stone wrote of the task of setting the Holocaust into a ‘world historical framework’ that ‘some fear that this process will lead to the Holocaust losing its supposed “uniqueness”’. Interestingly, he added that, ‘the cohort of historians that has done the most to advance comparative genocide studies in recent years—including Jürgen Zimmerer, Donald Bloxham, Dirk Moses, Scott Straus et al.—is careful to stress that . . . this need not come at the expense of the specificity of any particular event’, showing in the process a rather different conception of the field’s current innovators than Bergen’s.⁷⁷

One other example: I recently took up an invitation to contribute to a forthcoming edition of the Israeli journal *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, concerning, as the problematic put it:

... the relationship between the Shoah and genocides committed and planned by the Nazis against the Slavic peoples and other groups; and the relationship between the Shoah and other genocides. We would like the discussion to address in particular the question of whether the Shoah was unique or unprecedented in history, and whether, methodologically, comparative studies of mass murders carried out against other national groups is beneficial or harmful to the study of the Shoah committed against the Jewish people.

For a redundant concept, ‘uniqueness’ certainly finds a lot of casual employment. I should add that I think it vital that *Dapim* is bringing these issues into the light of explicit discussion. Pretending they don’t exist will do nothing to resolve the tensions between the moral politics of representation and prevention.

As good an illustration of those tensions as any can be found in the attitude of Bergen’s co-reviewer. Bartov implies that he does not subscribe to the idea of uniqueness, and his past work has been pathbreaking in contextualizing the Holocaust within the history of the war, but in his attitude to the contextualization of the Holocaust within a wider history of genocide he indeed seems one of those scholars who subscribes to the substance of ‘uniqueness’. I shall illustrate the point by working from his current rather dogmatic philosophy:

I am not convinced that writing about many genocides instead of just one is a moral statement; but I am sure that it precludes empathy. . . . No amount of contextualization and comparison can compensate for a view from below and within . . . the witnesses of [genocides]

will bring out the uniqueness of their experiences as individuals, as members of communities, of groups, of nations—an individual experience that was denied them by the killers and that finds no room in the broad sketches of comparative genocide studies and the generalized overview of events. Since the goal of genocide is to destroy groups as such, it behoves the historian to rescue these groups from oblivion, even if only in history and memory.

Here is crystallized the absolutist moralism to which I have alluded. But surely there is an essential place for both broader comparative study of the phenomenon of genocide and detailed study of its effects? Each strand will do things that the other cannot, and Bartov's current local study of the Holocaust in Buczacz is certainly set to be a hugely important contribution, but to decry one approach because it cannot do everything is strange, and has considerable moral connotations, especially for someone concerned with issues of genocide prevention in the here and now (not just about 'history and memory'), and thus by extension with systematic thought about the phenomenon. What about Bartov's avowed commitment to 'never again'? I assume that does not just apply to stigmatizing the work of scholars with whom he disagrees.

Besides, Bartov cannot even make the argument he seeks to make in his paper without using comparative scholarship in a rather blunt way. He relies heavily on Leo Kuper's taxonomy of genocidal motivations to argue the point we have already encountered, namely that the Holocaust is conceptually separate to other sorts of genocide on the grounds that there was no real political or military dynamic at stake in the decision to murder the Jews—it was a purely utopian deed rather than one of brutal pragmatism. (This distinction is an over-simplification and merits attention which I provide throughout my book.) As with many works of comparative genocide scholarship then and now, Kuper's is devoid of extensive examination of victim experiences, but that does not seem to matter suddenly. Comparative scholarship is apparently re-legitimated in Bartov's eyes provided it substantiates a claim of the Holocaust's categorical difference, which is just a mirror image of some of the comparative scholarship that seeks to assimilate the Holocaust completely to other instances of genocide. Bartov uses comparison as a prolegomenon to returning the focus to episodes of the Holocaust alone—an approach scarcely in short supply in the historiography. He uses Kuper the comparativist to shut down comparative genocide study.

Because of his dismissal of important trends in the large body of post-Kuper comparative scholarship, Bartov is unable even to comprehend why others might find those trends persuasive. He thinks it a contradiction in my work that on one hand I criticize Zygmunt Bauman for being so 'surprised' at the modern capacity for violence exhibited in the Holocaust (given the backdrop of European colonial violence), and on the other hand I claim that the Holocaust should still stimulate profound reflection because of its great significance. But there is no tension between these positions unless one predicates the great significance of the Holocaust on its unique difference.

On the ethics of reviewing other scholars' work

If I am correct that the influence of 'uniqueness' is still salient, then along with much of Bergen's critique falls her implication that I am trying to flog a 'dead horse' back to life for some sort of hidden agenda in the six pages of the book that I devote to it. What then comes into question is why Bergen should be so vociferous in proclaiming the horse's death despite evidence to the contrary. I assume she has a blindspot as a function of being deeply immersed in a field to which she has contributed much. That is perfectly normal; every scholar and field has such blindspots and it is the duty of critique to bring them to consciousness, as for instance by exposing the implications of her use of the language of centring/decentring. More problematic is the nature of Bergen's and particularly Bartov's response to someone challenging some of the claims for the inclusivity and openness of their field. In Bergen's case the issue is largely a matter of tone and 'fix[ing] on the book's flaws', but there is also a curious silence: she herself concedes without elaborating that I do identify 'a number of troubling potentials within Holocaust Studies—instrumentalization, sensationalization, oversimplification', and then summarily ignores the point for the rest of the review, as if it were not at all salient to her argument or mine. Bartov deploys out-right political allegation.

According to Bartov, for me 'there is a link between assertions of the Holocaust's centrality and uniqueness and the legitimization of the State of Israel as a colonial entity with its own history of ethnic cleansing and genocidal potential'. In a similar connection (one in which I am not specifically named, but which must allude to me or it has no place in a book review): 'Such arguments tend to come as rhetorical sleight of hand from scholars who have no specialized knowledge of Israel or the Palestinians but wish to express their political opinions; they end up using the Holocaust and the suffering of others for political ends'. After encountering the sentences readers may be surprised to learn that my book contains no reference to contemporary Israeli politics at all. Bartov's accusations—both about my agenda and my knowledge or lack of it on Israel or the Palestinians—are thus disappointingly disconnected from my book and, indeed, can be based only on ignorance since I have given him no evidence to judge either way.

What do I actually say about the history of the Middle East? *Two sentences* irritate Bartov in the whole book in this connection. One of them offends Bergen as well. Contrary to what Bartov seems to think, that sentence does not mention Israel. It comes in my aforementioned discussion of Bauman and western-centrism. I write: 'while the claim to uniqueness can be related to Jewish identity politics, it can also be another instance of Western-centrism' and then allude to the role of western-centric universalism as itself 'at the heart of Europe's violent interaction with the rest of the world'.⁷⁸ In the paragraph I focus on the 'western-centric' side of the issue rather than the 'identity politics' side of it. The reason I mentioned 'identity politics' here, having explained three pages previously what I meant by it (p 315) was actually to contrast the salience of western-centrism

with the arguments of scholars who have promoted the identity politics aspect as the most important thing to know about the political ramifications of the uniqueness idea. After all, obviously one need not be Jewish to subscribe to the idea of uniqueness. But even if I had meant to return the focus to identity politics here in the way Bartov reads me, it would still have been a legitimate thing to do. Why? Because it is a legitimate function of critique to draw out all possible implications of a philosophical proposition—here, ‘uniqueness’—to which people have a choice to subscribe, and legitimate to do so whether or not the subscribers recognize and embrace all the implications. Indeed, the critique is especially valuable if the subscribers do not realize all the implications. The notion, which Bergen makes explicit, that I effectively implicate all believers in uniqueness-universalism in the earlier crimes of the West, is badly wrongheaded. It is equivalent, by logical analogy, to the notion that I would be blaming contemporary Scottish nationalist acquaintances for the Franco-Prussian war, were I to point out possible ramifications of patriotism. Finally, I am glad to see Bergen ultimately retract her musing that my passage ‘verges on blaming the victim’, but see no reason for her to have made such a claim to begin with. We were never talking in any way about victimhood here, but about a mode of discourse about the event that has developed subsequent to the event and that can be freely adopted or avoided by absolutely anyone.

The other sentence that irritates Bartov is in the context of a paragraph detailing a list of expulsions after 1945 including from Bulgaria, Greece, and Yugoslavia. That paragraph itself appears in the context of my long discussion of European history prior to and immediately after the Holocaust, a discussion that spends a great deal of time on the ethnic violence of the collapse of the Romanov, Habsburg and Ottoman empires. The sentence is: ‘In the ensuing years [after the war], in another former Ottoman province, Palestine, the nascent Israeli state forced the dispersal of large numbers of Arabs and went on to deny them the right to return’. Bartov then accuses me of insufficiently contextualising this. I am at a loss to know why the context of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the often violent establishment in its wake of a number of smaller states is insufficient, especially as he does not protest against the description of other such violence in the same context.

As it stands, there is a nasty whiff of attempted censorship about Bartov’s stigmatization of this particular sentence. I assume he admits the essential accuracy of my very brief account. I do not know what work he would like additional contextualization to perform: I take it he does not wish to excuse the events. It is interesting, though, that over this issue Bartov seems to have regained his interest in the macro contextualization of events. Were he consistent in his prescription for the most important sort of historical understanding—i.e., empathy—he would be enjoining me to empathize with the victims of the *Naqba*.

Coda

Let me end on a more conciliatory note, for I take no pleasure in having so irritated two fine scholars in Bergen and Bartov, and they both have my thanks for devoting

the time and effort involved in reviewing me. If I am correct that there are still significant sensitivities over incorporating the Holocaust into a wider history of extreme violence, then it is important to foster mutual comprehension between different points of view, rather than heighten tensions. Pointing out internal contradictions and shortcomings in the other's position (something that Bartov, Bergen and I have all done in these pages) is intellectually important, but more important is recognition that we each have something to learn by dialogue. One thing on which I know we all concur is that this subject is too important to allow disagreements to prevent constructive engagement. Hopefully we can also agree that none of us has a monopoly on morally correct approaches to it.

Notes and references

- 1 The views presented here are my own; they do not represent the opinions of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- 2 On the latter, see Timothy Snyder, 'The coming age of slaughter: will global warming unleash genocide?', *The New Republic*, 28 October 2010, pp 20–21.
- 3 Mark Levene, 'Nation-states, empires, and the problems of historicizing genocide: a response to Wolfgang Reinhard and Anthony Pagden', *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol 9, No 1, 2007, p 132.
- 4 See e.g. Joanna Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jews from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).
- 5 Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).
- 6 Mark Mazower, 'God's grief', *Times Literary Supplement*, Vol 17, 2010, pp 7–8.
- 7 Levene, 'Nation-states', p 128.
- 8 Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).
- 9 Bloxham, *Final Solution*, pp 139–143, 314; Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), part II; Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, Vol 1 (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), pp 73–112.
- 10 Bloxham, *Final Solution*, p 108.
- 11 Peter Holquist, 'The origins of "crimes against humanity"', unpublished paper (2010); Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: American and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), pp 1–85.
- 12 A. Dirk Moses, 'Empire, colony, genocide', in A.D. Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), p 21, citing Raphael Lemkin, 'Hitler case-outline': 'The case against the Jews and the Gypsies was not based upon colonisatery [sic] but upon racial considerations . . . The race theory served the purpose of consolidating internally the German people. . . by comparing them with those who were called and classified as vermin of the earth—the Jews and the Gypsies'. Moses does not analyze this quotation, which contradicts his own argument.
- 13 Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998); Lawrence Douglas, *The Memory of Judgment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp 23–37, 97–101; Donald Bloxham, *Genocide on Trial* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp 81–82; Omer Bartov, *The Jew in Cinema* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp 47–49. A postwar British documentary was introduced on ITN with the following false statement: 'Eleven million people died in Nazi Germany's death camps; six million were Jews'.
- 14 Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin (eds and trans.), *From a Ruined Garden*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998); David G. Roskies (ed.), *The Literature of Destruction* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society, 1988).
- 15 Bloxham, *Genocide*; Douglas, *Judgment*, pp 11–94; Michael R. Marrus, *The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial, 1945–46* (Boston: Bedford Press, 1997); Arie J. Kochavi, *Prelude to Nuremberg* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).
- 16 Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961); Dan Michman, *Holocaust Historiography* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003), pp 9–40.
- 17 Devin O. Pendas, 'Transitional justice and just transitions', *European Studies Forum*, Vol 38, 2008, pp 57–64; Pendas, 'Seeking justice, finding law', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol 81, 2009, pp 347–368; Pendas, *The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963–1965* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Rebecca Wittmann, *Beyond Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

- 18 Hanna Yablonka, *The State of Israel vs. Adolf Eichmann*, trans. Ora Cummings and David Herman (New York: Schocken, 2004).
- 19 Raul Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), p 66.
- 20 New English editions of *The Destruction of the European Jews* were published in 1985 and 2003; German, French, Italian, Romanian, and Dutch translations appeared in 1982, 1988, 1995, 1997, and 2008, respectively.
- 21 Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933–45* (New York: Pelican, 1975); Philip Friedman, *Roads to Extinction*, ed. Ada June Friedman (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1980); Hans Mommsen, *From Weimar to Auschwitz*, trans. Philip O'Connor (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Christopher R. Browning, *The Origins of the Final Solution* (Lincoln, NA: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Peter Longerich, *Politik der Vernichtung* (Munich: Piper, 1998); Longerich, *Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, II: The Years of Extermination, 1939–1945* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007).
- 22 Christopher R. Browning, 'From "ethnic cleansing" to genocide to the "final solution": the evolution of Nazi Jewish policy, 1939–1941', in Christopher R. Browning, *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp 1–25, 26–57, respectively; Browning, *The Path to Genocide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Götz Aly, *Final Solution*, trans. Belinda Cooper and Alison Brown (New York: Arnold, 1999).
- 23 Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Amir Weiner (ed.), *Landscaping the Human Garden* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).
- 24 Steven B. Bowman, 'Greece', *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*, ed. Walter Laqueur (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp 265–270; Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüppers, 'Elimination of the Jewish national home in Palestine', *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol 35, 2007, pp 111–141.
- 25 Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Shimon Redlich, *Together and Apart in Brzezany* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002); Shmuel Spector, *The Holocaust of Volhynian Jews, 1941–1944* (Jerusalem, 1986, in Hebrew); Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien, 1941–1944* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1996); Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Ray Brandon and Wendy Lower (eds), *The Shoah in Ukraine* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008); Omer Bartov, 'Interethnic relations in the Holocaust as seen through postwar testimonies', in Doris Bergen (ed.), *Lessons and Legacies*, VII (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008), pp 101–124; Bartov, *Erased* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Bartov, 'Eastern Europe as the site of genocide', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol 80, No 3, 2008, pp 557–593.
- 26 Leo Kuper, *Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Robert Melson, *Revolution and Genocide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Alexander Laban Hinton (ed.), *Annihilating Difference* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Power, 'A Problem from Hell'; Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Jacques Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, trans. Cynthia Schoch (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Worse than War* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009).
- 27 Kuper, *Genocide*, pp 17–18.
- 28 Kuper, *Genocide*, p 17.
- 29 Kuper, *Genocide*, p 20.
- 30 Kuper, *Genocide*, pp 23–24.
- 31 Kuper, *Genocide*, pp 24–30.
- 32 Kuper, *Genocide*, pp 30–31.
- 33 Kuper, *Genocide*, pp 31–32.
- 34 Kuper, *Genocide*, pp 32–36.
- 35 Kuper, *Genocide*, pp 84–85.
- 36 Kuper, *Genocide*, p 48.
- 37 Kuper, *Genocide*, pp 86–87.
- 38 Kuper, *Genocide*, p 88.
- 39 Kuper, *Genocide*, pp 91–93.
- 40 Kuper, *Genocide*, pp 94–95.
- 41 Omer Bartov, 'Communal genocide', in Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz (eds), *Shatterzone of Empires: Identity and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, forthcoming). See also Christopher R. Browning, *Remembering Survival* (New York: Norton, 2009); Browning, *Collected Memories* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003).

- 42 Bloxham provides something of a disclaimer on the back cover, where he points out that ‘emblems can lack precision: the rail extension through the tower was only completed in spring 1944, long after the vast majority of Holocaust victims had met their deaths’.
- 43 E.g. Nazi German destruction of Jews is examined in the context of expulsions and extreme violence in Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); and as part of a wider analysis of religion and violence in Omer Bartov and Phyllis Mack (eds), *In God's Name: Genocide and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghann Books, 2001). Sexual violence in the Holocaust and German-occupied Europe is contextualized within the history of sexuality in Dagmar Herzog (ed.), *Brutality and Desire: War and Sexuality in Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); other contextualizing efforts and challenges are evident in Paul Betts and Christian Wiese (eds), *Years of Persecution, Years of Extermination: Saul Friedländer and the Future of Holocaust Studies* (London: Continuum, 2010), the latter with a glowing endorsement from Donald Bloxham. The Herzog and Betts and Wiese volumes probably appeared too late to be considered by Bloxham; the Bartov/Mack volume and, more surprisingly, Naimark do not appear in the bibliography or notes.
- 44 Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); for an explicit discussion of key issues, see Weinberg, ‘The Holocaust and World War II: a dilemma in teaching’, in Donald G. Schilling (ed.), *Lessons and Legacies II: Teaching the Holocaust in a Changing World* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998), pp 26–40. Bloxham cites the 1995 volume of essays on a minor point (ch. 5, note 1) but does not acknowledge Weinberg's integration of the Holocaust and World War II.
- 45 Influential works include Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Sybil Milton, ‘The Holocaust: The Gypsies’, in Samuel Totten and William S. Parsons, eds., *Genocide in the Twentieth Century: An Anthology of Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp 133–168; and Milton, ‘The context of the Holocaust’, *German Studies Review*, Vol 13, No 2, 1990, pp 269–283. Friedlander's book appears in one note, only as a source of general information (ch. 5, note 5).
- 46 See, among other works, Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), included by Bloxham only in two footnotes related to World War I: one listing ‘Western-centric’ works (ch. 2, note 3) and another referring to the impact of the war on staffing Freikorps and later Nazi institutions (ch. 4, note 52); Dan Stone (ed.), *Historiography of Genocide* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), see Stone's contribution, ‘The Holocaust and its historiography’, esp. pp 387–391, ‘Holocaust and/as genocide’ and ‘Conclusions’; and Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, ‘The study of mass murder and genocide’, in Gellately and Kiernan (eds), *The Specter of Genocide. Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp 3–26.
- 47 See, among other works, Helen Fein, *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective* (London: Sage, 1993); Robert Melson, *Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
- 48 Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).
- 49 Raul Hilberg, *Destruction of the European Jews*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), p 1296; see also Christopher Browning, ‘Spanning a career: three editions of Raul Hilberg's *Destruction of the European Jews*’, in Doris L. Bergen (ed.), *Lessons and Legacies VIII: From Generation to Generation* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008), pp 191–202.
- 50 See, for starters, Zvi Gitelman (ed.), *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997); Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community of Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); and Gross, *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland after Auschwitz* (New York: Random House, 2006); John-Paul Himka, *Ukrainians, Jews and the Holocaust: Divergent Memories* (Saskatoon, SK: Heritage, 2009); Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Omer Bartov, ‘Interethnic relations in the Holocaust as seen through postwar testimonies: Buczacz, East Galicia, 1941–1944’, in Bergen, *Lessons and Legacies VIII*, pp 101–124; Jeffrey S. Kopstein and Jason Wittenberg, ‘Deadly communities: local political milieus and the persecution of Jews in occupied Poland’, *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol 44, No 3, 2011, pp 259–283; Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).
- 51 Holly Case, ‘Territorial revision and the Holocaust: Hungary and Slovakia during World War II’, in Bergen, *Lessons and Legacies XIII*, pp 222–244; Diana Dumitru, ‘The attitude of the non-Jewish population of

- Bessarabia and Transnistria to the Jews during the Holocaust', *Yad Vashem Studies*, Vol 37, No 1, 2009; Yes-hayahu A. Jelinek, *The Carpathian Diaspora: The Jews of Subcarpathian Rus' and Mukachevo, 1848–1948*, trans. Joel A. Linsider (New York: Carpatho-Rusyn Research Center, 2007).
- 52 Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Bloxham, *Genocide, The World Wars, and the Unweaving of Europe* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008).
- 53 For recent, outstanding scholarship of relevance on this point, see Max Bergholz, 'Mass killing in a Bosnian community during World War II and the postwar culture of silence', (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2010).
- 54 On hatred as a product of violence, see also Doris L. Bergen, 'Nazi antisemitism', in Albert Lindemann and Richard S. Levy (eds), *Antisemitism: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), ch 12.
- 55 Semion Lyandres, *The Bolsheviks' 'German Gold' Revisited: An Inquiry into the 1917 Accusations* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Center for Russian and East European Studies, 1995).
- 56 Sara Ginaite-Rubinson, *Resistance and Survival: The Jewish Community in Kaunas, 1941-1944* (Oakville, ON: Mosaic Press and the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, 2005).
- 57 See, most notably, Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontier of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2007). An earlier article by Bryant appears in one of Bloxham's notes (ch 5, note 18). On the indeterminacy of ethnic/national/racial/religious categories in other contexts and their implications, see Doris L. Bergen, 'The Nazi concept of Volksdeutsche and the exacerbation of anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 29, 1994, pp 569–582; Kate Brown, 'The final solution turns East: how Soviet internationalism aided and abetted Nazi racial genocide', in Bergen, *Lessons and Legacies VIII*, pp 83–99; and Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- 58 Elie Wiesel, at the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993, turned to Bill Clinton and said, 'Mr. President, I have been in the former Yugoslavia last fall. I cannot sleep since what I have seen. We must do something to prevent the bloodshed. Something, anything must be done'. 'Elie Wiesel's Remarks at the dedication ceremonies for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 22 April 22 1993': <http://www.ushmm.org/research/library/faq/languages/en/06/01/ceremony/?content=wiesel>; Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), esp. ch 3, 'Comparisons with other genocides'. Also notable for its comparative premise is Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Worse Than War: Genocide, Eliminationism, and the Ongoing Assault on Humanity* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009).
- 59 One manifestation of the complex and dynamic relationship between Holocaust studies and genocide studies is the massive 'Remembering for the Future' conference held at Oxford University in 1998, on the theme of 'The Holocaust in an Age of Genocide'. See the resulting publication: John K. Roth and Elisabeth Maxwell (eds), *Remembering for the Future: The Holocaust in An Age of Genocide*, 3 vols. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001). Donald Bloxham has a chapter, 'Jewish slave labour and its relationship to the "Final Solution"', in Vol 1, pp 163–186.
- 60 Saul Friedländer, 'Prologue', in Jonathan Petropoulos, Lynn Rapaport, and John K. Roth (eds), *Lessons and Legacies IX: Memory, History, and Responsibility: Reassessments of the Holocaust, Implications for the Future* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), p 3.
- 61 I thank Dan Stone, Tom Lawson, Mark Roseman and Dirk Moses for their comments on a draft of this response.
- 62 Mazower, 'God's grief'.
- 63 Emphases added.
- 64 Donald Bloxham and Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust: Critical Historical Approaches* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).
- 65 See especially conclusion and chs 3–4 of *Genocide on Trial*; additionally, Bloxham, 'Jewish witnesses in war crimes trials of the postwar era', in David Bankier and Dan Michman (eds), *Holocaust Historiography in Context* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008), pp 539–544.
- 66 Bloxham, *The Final Solution*, p 14; Saul Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997, 2007); for assessments, Paul Betts and Christian Wiese (eds), *Years of Persecution, Years of Extermination: Saul Friedländer and the Future of Holocaust Studies* (London: Continuum, 2010). See Goldhagen's review of the Friedländer, *Nazi Germany and the Jews* in *The Washington Post*, 13 May 2007: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/11/AR2007051101768.html>
- 67 Monika Richarz, 'Luftaufnahme—Die Schwierigkeiten der Heimatforscher mit der jüdischen Geschichte', *Babylon*, Vol 8, 1991, pp 27–33. I thank Stefanie Schüler-Springorum for this reference.

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- 68 I am not talking about focusing solely on Jewish victims here: on some of the politics of victim selection, see my 'Britain's Holocaust memorial days: reshaping the past in the service of the present', *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol 21, No 1, 2003, pp 41–62.
- 69 Editors' introduction to Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2010), pp 1–15, here p 5.
- 70 Christian Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp 2, 236, 258.
- 71 A. Dirk Moses, 'Conceptual blockages and definitional dilemmas in the racial century: genocide of indigenous peoples and the Holocaust', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol 36, No 4, 2002, pp 7–36.
- 72 Moses, 'Conceptual blockages'; A. Dirk Moses, 'The United Nations, humanitarianism and human rights: war crimes/genocide trials for Pakistani soldiers in Bangladesh, 1971–1974', in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman (ed), *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century: A Critical History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp 258–280; idem, 'Paranoia and partisanship: genocide studies, Holocaust historiography and the "apocalyptic conjuncture"', *Historical Journal*, Vol 54, No 2, 2011, pp 615–645. On the Armenian case, Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), esp. chs 5–6; on Yugoslavia, Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), pp 245–255. On the tensions between commemoration and preventionism in British public life, and some suggested synergies, see Bloxham, 'Britain's Holocaust memorial days'.
- 73 David Moshman, 'Conceptual constraints on thinking about genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol 3, No 3, 2001, pp 431–450. For the politics of comparison and the Armenian case, Donald Bloxham, 'The organization of genocide: perpetration in comparative perspective', in Olaf Jensen and Claus-Christian Szejnmann (eds), *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers: Perpetrators in Comparative Perspective* (London: Palgrave, 2008), pp 185–200.
- 74 He was influenced both by his family's experience in Europe and by his time in Nigeria immediately prior to the Biafran conflict. See Robert Melson, 'My journey in the study of genocide', in Samuel Totten and Steven L. Jacobs (eds), *Pioneers of Genocide Studies: Confronting Mass Death in the Century of Genocide* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2002).
- 75 Helen Fein, *Imperial Crime and Punishment: The Massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and British Judgment, 1919–1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1977).
- 76 Richard J. Evans, 'Who remembers the Poles?', *London Review of Books*, 4 November 2010. My emphasis.
- 77 Dan Stone, 'Beyond the "Auschwitz syndrome": Holocaust historiography after the Cold War', *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol 44, No 5, 2010, pp 454–468, here p 466.
- 78 On some of the ideological connotations of uniqueness regarding the West's violent relations to the rest of the world, see also Moses, 'Conceptual blockages'.