

HOLOCAUST

The Nazi Persecution
and Murder of the Jews

Peter Longerich

'Compelling'

The Washington Times

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PETER LONGERICH

Translated by Shaun Whiteside

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London and Munich, November 2009

Abbreviations

AA	Auswärtiges Amt (Foreign Ministry)
Abt.	Department
ADAP	<i>Akten zur Deutschen Auswärtigen Politik</i>
AdV	Alldeutscher Verband
AGK	Archivum Głównej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce
AOK	Army High Command
APL	Archivum Państwowe w Lublinie
Aufl.	Edition
BAB	Bundesarchiv Berlin
BAM	Bundesarchiv/Militärarchiv
Batl.	Battalion
Bd.	volume
BDC	Berlin Document Centre
BdO	Commander of the Order Police
BdS	Commander of the Security Police
BHSt.A	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv
<i>Biuletyn</i>	<i>Biuletyn Główniej Komisji Badania Zbrodni Hitlerowskich w Polsce</i>
<i>BLI</i>	<i>Bulletin Leo Baeck Institute</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>Berliner Tageblatt</i>
CDJC	Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine
CdZ	Head of the Civil Administration
<i>CEH</i>	<i>Central European History</i>
CV	Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens (Central Association for Citizens of the Jewish Faith)

DAF	Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labour Front)
DAZ	<i>Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung</i>
DG	<i>Durchgangsstrasse</i>
DHR	German University Circle
DHV	German National Association of Commercial Employees
DGFP	Documents on German Foreign Policy
DiM	<i>Dokumenty i Materialy</i>
DNVP	German National[ist] People's Party
DVEP	German Völkish Freedom Party
EK	Einsatzkommando (Task Force Commando)
EM	Ereignismeldung (Action Report USSR)
EWZ	Einwandererzentrale (Immigration Centre)
FRUS	<i>Foreign Relations of the United States</i>
FZ	<i>Frankfurter Zeitung</i>
Gestapa	Geheime Staatspolizeiamt (Secret State Police Office)
Gestapo	Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police)
GFP	Geheime Feldpolizei (Secret Military Police)
GG	General Government
GSR	<i>German Studies Review</i>
GStaA	Geheime Staatsarchiv Berlin-Dahlem
HGS	<i>Holocaust and Genocide Studies</i>
HSSPF	Higher SS and Police Commander
1a	Senior Ranking General Staff Officer
1c	Third Ranking General Staff Officer (Intelligence)
IfZ	Institut für Zeitgeschichte
IKG	Israelitische Kultusgemeinde
IMT	<i>International Military Tribunal</i> (Nuremberg)
JA	<i>Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung</i>
JDC	Joint Distribution Committee
JR	<i>Jüdische Rundschau</i>
KdO	Commander of the Order Police
KdS	Commander of the Security Police
KL	Konzentrationslager (Concentration Camp)
KPD	German Communist Party

Kripo	Criminal Police
KTB	<i>Kriegstagebuch (War Diary)</i>
KZ	Concentration Camp
LAF	Lithuanian Activist Front
LBIY	<i>Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook</i>
LG	Landgericht (Provincial Court)
LV	Provincial Association
MBliV	<i>Ministerialblatt für die innere Verwaltung</i>
MGM	<i>Militär-geschichtliche Mitteilungen</i>
NA	National Archives, Washington DC
NKVD	Soviet People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs
NS, ns	National Socialist
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
NS-Hago	Nationalsozialistische Handels-, Handwerks- und Gewerbeorganisation (National Socialist Association for Commerce, Crafts, and Trade)
NYT	<i>New York Times</i>
NZZ	<i>Neue Züricher Zeitung</i>
ObdH	Commander-in-Chief of the Army
OKH	Oberkommando des Heeres (Army High Command)
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (Armed Forces High Command)
OS	Osabi Archive (Moscow)
OT	Organisation Todt
OUN	Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists
PAA	Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes
Pol.Abt.	Political department
RAF	Royal Air Force
Reg.Bez.	Regierungsbezirk (Government District)
RFSS	Reichsführer SS
RGBI	<i>Reichsgesetzblatt</i>
RKF	Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums (Reich Commissioner for Settlement)
RMBliV	<i>Reichsministerialblatt für die innere Verwaltung</i>

RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Head Office)
RVJD	Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland
RWM	Reichswirtschaftsministerium (Reich Ministry of Economics)
SA	Sturmabteilung (Storm Troop)
SD	Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service)
Sipo	Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police)
SK	Sonderkommando
Sopade	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (German Social Democratic Party)
SS	Schutzstaffel (Protection Squads)
SSPF	SS and Police Commander
StA	Staatsarchiv
STA	Staatsanwaltschaft
StdF	Stellvertreter des Führers (Führer's Deputy)
StS	State Secretary
SWCA	<i>Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual</i>
TSD	<i>Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente</i>
USHM	United States Holocaust Museum
VB	<i>Völkischer Beobachter</i>
VfZ	<i>Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte</i>
VO	Decree
VOGG	<i>Verordnungsblatt für das Generalgouvernement</i>
Vomi	Volksdeutsche Mittelstelle (Ethnic German Agency)
VZ	<i>Vossische Zeitung</i>
WL	Wiener Library
WVHA	SS Business and Administration Head Office
YIVO	Yiddischer Vissenschaftlikher Institut
YV	Yad Vashem
YVS	<i>Yad Vashem Studies</i>
ZAA	<i>Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie</i>
ZASM	Zentrum zur Aufbewahrung historisch-dokumentarischer Sammlungen Moskau
z.b.V	zur besonderer Verwendung (for special purposes)
ZfG	<i>Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft</i>

ZGO	<i>Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins</i>
ZOB	Zydowsk Organizacja Bojowa (Jewish combat organization)
ZSt	Zentralstelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen zur Aufklärung nationalsozialistischer Verbrechen
ZUV	Zentraler Untersuchungsvorgang
ZZW	Zydowski Zwiazek Wojskowy (Jewish Military Association)

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INTRODUCTION

Current State of Research, Methodology

When the German edition of this book appeared twelve years ago in 1998 research on the situation of the murder of the European Jews was in a transitional state because of the opening of the Eastern European archives at the beginning of the 1990s. An intensive phase of research had begun using a large number of documents that had hitherto been inaccessible and asking new questions of more familiar material. Holocaust research had become a steadily developing field and now, at the point when this English edition is being prepared, this process of development has by no means ceased. If it seemed extremely ambitious in the late 1990s to undertake a comprehensive account of the persecution and murder of the European Jews from the perspective of the perpetrators, it is no less so now.

The original aim of this book was to make a contribution to the lively debate amongst Holocaust researchers about when the Nazi leadership took the decision to implement a 'final solution' (*Endlösung*) to what they called the 'Jewish question' (*Judenfrage*). Via an analysis of the processes of decision-making, the book hoped to offer an explanation of the causes of the terrible events that constituted the Holocaust. When I began preparing this book in the mid-1990s, the state of so-called 'perpetrator research' was defined by two opposing schools of thought: on the one side were the 'intentionalists',¹ who made the focus of their analysis the intentions and objectives of Hitler and other leading Nazis, and on the other were the 'structuralists', who emphasized the importance of the bureaucratic apparatus put in place by the Nazis and the ultimately uncontrollable process of what Hans Mommsen termed 'cumulative radicalization'. The debate between the two schools of thought had at that point moved through all the usual phases of academic debates—hypotheses had been developed, the different sides had confronted each other, arguments had been improved and intensified, positions had become entrenched, and the discussion had become increasingly polarized. Research on the decision to implement a 'final solution' had become deeply embedded within

this debate and followed the basic pattern that intentionalist scholars assumed the decision had been reached at an early point—in the context of the attack on the Soviet Union or even in the period preceding this²—whilst functionalists either assumed, like Christopher Browning, that the decision had been taken in the autumn of 1941,³ and took the form of a step-by-step process,⁴ or took the view that the mass murder of the Jews was the result of developments within the Nazis' apparatus of power that ultimately tended towards a 'final solution' without there being any need for an explicit decision to be taken.⁵ Saul Friedländer and Raul Hilberg took a position midway between the two by opting for 'Summer 1941'.⁶ In 1997 the debate was revived once more by a suggestion made by Christian Gerlach to the effect that a decision on the 'Final Solution' was made in December 1941 as a direct reaction to the entry of the United States into the war.⁷

The fact that such divergent interpretations were possible is partly explicable by the context of the heated debate between intentionalists and functionalists and their apparently irreconcilable, even mutually antagonistic positions. The style in which this debate was conducted—in the particularly dogmatic manner typical of controversies between German historians—strongly affected the overall character of research on the history of Holocaust perpetrators. Even after the intentionalist-functional debate died down, research on the perpetrators in recent years has continued to be dominated by strong dichotomies.

This needs to be explained in more detail. Far from receding, in the last ten years the flood of new work on the Holocaust has swollen. This is particularly true of research into the perpetrators, the so-called *Täterforschung*, a facet of Holocaust research that is overwhelmingly though not exclusively the province of German scholars. Within the field of *Täterforschung* there are clearly three areas in which work has been concentrated: first, the study of the apparatus and membership of the SS and Police, in which the principal focus has been on the Security Police (*Sicherheitspolizei*) and the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*),⁸ concentration camps,⁹ the bodies responsible for deportations,¹⁰ and the *Einsatzgruppen* or other murder squads;¹¹ second, regional research so that we now have almost complete coverage of the implementation of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe;¹² third, attempts to find new thematic approaches to the topic of the Holocaust such as ways of establishing a connection between the mass murders and economic planning,¹³ vast projects for the deportation of whole ethnic groups,¹⁴ the National Socialists' forced labour programme (*Arbeitseinsatz*),¹⁵ or the expropriation of Jewish property,¹⁶ amongst other areas.

Just as was the case in the debate between structuralists and intentionalists, here too similar attempts can be discerned to try to shape the discussion along the lines of major dichotomies: regional research has initiated a discussion of the role of 'centre and periphery',¹⁷ and the appearance of works emphasizing the 'utilitarian'—which is to say material—interests that were at stake in the murder of the Jews have led to the opposition of 'ideology' and 'rationality'. Within the context

of the disagreement between Christopher Browning and Daniel Goldhagen on the motivation of the executions (*Todesschützen*) in the police battalions a debate emerged about whether the perpetrators were mainly driven to carry out these killings by 'situational' factors or whether they were predisposed towards these crimes by the anti-Semitic milieu in which they grew up.¹⁸ The tendency of recent research to emphasize an individual's mindset or *Weltanschauung*, his capacity for independent initiative and the room for manoeuvre available to him is clearly a counter-trend to the older image of a perpetrator at a desk, merely carrying out orders within anonymous structures, behaving like a cog in a great machine.¹⁹

Whilst such dichotomies and polarized debates can be of use to research, they create the danger that—as was the case with the debate between the intentionalists and structuralists—new polemics are kindled without ever leading to significantly new insights into their subject matter. It seems to me that Holocaust research has now reached a point where the debate has to reach out beyond such oppositions and dichotomies and become accustomed to a mode of discussion that is more complex in structure. It is clear that the battles between one-dimensional explanations can no longer do justice to the complexity of the object of our study—the systematic murder of the European Jews.

The more research develops and is intensified, the more obvious it becomes that oppositional pairings such as intention and function, centre and periphery, rationality and ideology, situation or disposition are not mutually exclusive but illuminate varying aspects of historical reality in complementary, even interdependent ways.²⁰ However, when one attempts to read the relationship of the antagonisms defined as so irreconcilable by historical research in dialectical terms, it seems virtually pointless to keep on trying to play off one element of the opposition against the other. The contradictions can only be resolved if they are regarded as the starting point for developing historical connections on a higher level.

For example, if one looks back on the debate between structuralists and intentionalists with a degree of hindsight, it becomes clear that both schools have emphasized differing aspects of the same phenomenon that on closer inspection prove to be by no means mutually exclusive. People who pursue their intention to carry out mass murder do so within certain structures; these structures do not act of their own volition, they do so via human beings who combine their actions with intentions. It is the same with centre and periphery: as will be shown as this study progresses, the initiatives of Nazi potentates in the various regions of Germany were an essential component of centrally managed policies, but the leadership role of the centre was itself safeguarded by competitiveness between the various functionaries. Similarly the 'pragmatic' basis for Nazi *Judenpolitik*—Aryanization, the confiscation of living space, the exploitation of the labour force, and so on—was matched up with ideological strategies designed to justify it; and at the same time Nazi ideology was itself validated by the 'successes' of its pragmatic implementation.

In order to set these historical connections into a context, for the 1998 German version of this book I turned to the concept of *Judenpolitik*. This was a contemporary coinage, used by the perpetrators themselves and applied many times before in historical research, particularly in scholarship in German. This presents a difficulty here in that the phrases 'Jewish policy', or better still, 'anti-Jewish policy' are inadequate as translations of *Judenpolitik* since the German word *Politik* combines the senses of 'politics' and 'policy'. This makes it very well suited as a term to describe and analyse the complex process of the persecution of the Jews. In my view, the concept of *Judenpolitik*—which will be used in German throughout this study—comprises the following factors.

First, *Judenpolitik* has the sense of 'policy', the Nazis' long-term intentions and goals in respect of the Jews, their strategy for making real the utopian dream of a racially homogeneous national community via the systematic exclusion, segregation, and elimination of the Jews.

Historical experience shows that even the most radical of political aims, pursued by a determined leadership and implemented by an extensive apparatus of power can seldom be put into practice in a simple and straightforward manner. Political decision-making processes develop their own structures and modalities. What this means for an analysis of the persecution of the Jews and for a study of the Holocaust is that Nazi *Judenpolitik* carved out its own political territory comparable with that of foreign policy, economic policy, and social policy, for example. In this field of politics, whilst the top-level strategies and far-reaching intentions of the major players were undeniably effective, they were subject to the same sorts of friction and distraction as in other political fields or in any large organization. These include rivalry between the protagonists (for which the structures of the Nazi regime were particularly favourable), communication problems between the various levels of the hierarchy, the ponderousness of the mechanisms of power, and so forth.

Above all, however, the field of *Judenpolitik* did not develop autonomously or independently, but functioned within a context determined by the other areas of political activity. It penetrated them and radically transformed them. The National Socialists tended to understand traditional political fields (such as foreign, social, and labour policy) in a racist manner and to redefine them along racist lines. Their starting point was the assumption that there was something akin to an 'international Jewish problem' that foreign policy had to focus on; they assumed that social policy in the Nazi state took the form of welfare provision for 'Aryans' alone and not for the 'racially inferior'; they took it as read that Jewish labour was essentially unproductive and parasitic and therefore, as a matter of principle, only used Jewish people for particularly onerous and humiliating physical work. Similarly they organized their policies on nutrition and housing, the occupation of conquered territory, and other policy areas according to racially determined hierarchies and racially determined conceptual approaches in which anti-Semitism always played a major role.

Finally the overall political context changed with time, and during the war did so with ever-increasing speed. Nazi *Judenpolitik* thus took on quite different forms in different phases of the progress of the 'Third Reich'. For tactical reasons it was modified, retracted, or accelerated; at critical points it developed erratically, disjointedly, and in sequences of action that developed their own internal dynamics. This kind of development cannot be fully grasped by a conventional model of understanding political decision-making (which stresses the formulation of political goals, the process of decision-making itself, and the implementation of those decisions). The implementation of *Judenpolitik* took on its own dynamic such that decision-making and even the formulation of political aims were subsumed within it.

Judenpolitik was subject to sudden shifts; it developed contradictorily, within a complex series of linkages and without any form of precedent. It could not be implemented by people who were merely following orders but required active protagonists who could operate on their own initiative and understand intuitively what the leadership required of them. *Judenpolitik* is characterized by the relatively large scope afforded to the activities of those who put it into practice. This system could only function if the most important aspects of *Judenpolitik* commanded a consensus amongst those involved with it. It would only function if it was actively supported by at least part of the population, the active adherents of National Socialism. It was thus necessary to be able to communicate the aims and mechanisms of *Judenpolitik* to the public at all times and with varying degrees of openness. *Judenpolitik* was thus publicly disseminated, debated, and legitimated—albeit often in a disguised manner.²¹

What seems to me to be crucial to any analysis of this complex phenomenon is the fact that *Judenpolitik* was central to the whole National Socialist movement, indeed that the very aims, the distinctiveness, and the uniqueness of National Socialism as a historical phenomenon were determined by its *Judenpolitik*. This can be clarified in a number of ways.

The basic aim of the Nazi movement was a racially homogeneous national community (*Volkgemeinschaft*) in which the potential for creative energy inherent in the German people could at last come to fruition and where the German people could achieve full self-realization. The Nazi view was that the harmony of the national community to which they aspired would permit the resolution of virtually all the major problems of their age, whether they were aspects of foreign or domestic policy, social, economic, or cultural in nature. It was not possible to establish such a racially homogeneous community because it was based on erroneous beliefs about the division of humanity into different 'races', so Nazi racism could only operate negatively: via negative measures, via discrimination, exclusion, elimination, via the removal of alien elements—in which process, for historical reasons, anti-Jewish measures took on a central role. In the course of this process of exclusion the NSDAP was supposed to succeed in bringing under its control those areas of life that needed to be 'made Jew-free' (*entjudet*). Thus for