It is well known that the Nazis treated human beings with extreme cruelty but it is less widely recognized that the Nazis also took some pains to develop and pass extensive animal protection laws. How could the Nazis have professed such concern for animals while treating humans so badly? It would be easy to dismiss Nazi proclamations on animals as mere hypocrisy but there may be other explanations for the contradiction. For example, anecdotal reports and psychological evaluations of many prominent Nazis suggest they felt affection for animals but dislike of humans. Second, animal protection measures, whether sincere or not, may have been a legal veil to attack Jews and others considered undesirable. Third, the Nazis blurred moral distinctions between animals and people and tended to treat members of even the Master Race as animals at times. This article argues that at the core of the Nazi treatment of humans and animals was a reconstitution of society's boundaries and margins. All human cultures seek to protect what is perceived to be pure from that which is seen to be dangerous and polluting and most societies establish fairly clear boundaries between people and animals. In Nazi Germany, however, human identity was not contaminated by including certain animal traits but certain peoples were considered to be a very real danger to Aryan purity.


From a family who fled Germany in 1933, the author seeks to explore how so few people left Germany preceding and during WWII, and how perpetrators were psychologically affected by their actions. Moreover, the author seeks answers from the children of Nazis, since many articles and studies had been done on children on survivors, but little research was conducted about the effects of the war on children of perpetrators. His main source of information was personal interviews conducted in Germany, and each chapter focuses around a specific interview.


This chapter deals with modern indifference to the Holocaust and the need to educate and accept the past. Two issues of concern are addressed: the recency of the Holocaust and the fact that some survivors are still alive today, and the historical truth of the events that occurred during the Holocaust.


This book seeks to answer the questions surrounding the rise of evil and its perpetuation using social science. The book is written somewhat from the perspective of the perpetrator, in an attempt to understand yet not condone their actions. Based on extensive research from former writings, Evil also uses true stories as illustrations of proposed theories.

This chapter focuses on the psychological aspects of how the Holocaust occurred. First analyzing Hitler, the writer believes that Hitler's anti-Semitism was pathologically part of his personality, despite the unknown identity of his paternal grandfather. The second half of the article addresses the German population in general, how their involvement or passive acceptance of the Holocaust was created. Human nature with respect to murder is discussed, and the article concludes with the idea that the Holocaust would probably not have occurred without Hitler's rise to power.


"Three psychological approaches attempting to explain the behavior of the perpetrators of the Holocaust are reviewed and evaluated. The first is a situational approach building largely on the laboratory experiments of the social psychologist Stanley Milgram. The second is an approach focusing on the personal dispositions of the perpetrators, the primary example being work which has tried to find evidence of psychopathology among the Nazi leaders. The third is an interactional approach - one that sees the Nazis' murderous actions as a product of both situational pressures and personal dispositions. Among the last, the work of Helen Fein stands out because, through its main findings, it encompasses the diversity of Nazi destructiveness: both the enthusiastic self-initiated horrors of the hate-drive antisemite and the impersonal, routinized actions of the bureaucrat carrying out the orders of his superior."


"Genocide, mass murders, massacre. The words themselves are chilling, evoking images of the slaughter of countless innocents. What dark impulses lurk in our minds that even today can justify the eradication of thousands and even millions of unarmed human being caught in the crossfire of political, cultural or ethnic hostilities? This question lies at the heart of Why Not Kill Them All? Co-written by sociologist Daniel Chirot and psychologist Clark McCauley, the book goes beyond exploring the motives that have provided the psychological underpinnings for genocidal killings. It offers a historical and comparative context that adds up to taxonomy of genocidal events. Rather than suggesting that such horrors are the product of abnormal or criminal minds, the authors emphasize the normality of these horrors: killing by category has occurred on every continent and in every century. But genocide is much less common than the imbalance of power that makes it possible. Throughout history human societies have developed techniques aimed at limiting inter-group violence. Incorporating ethnographic, historical and current political evidence, this book examines the mechanisms of constraint that human societies have employed to temper partisan passions and reduce carnage."


This chapter covers the developing psychological theories in Germany in the 1930s, the history of the Goring Institute, and the fate of many psychoanalysts after it was banned in 1933. Psychoanalysis became a tool used by the Nazis, and many psychoanalysts became indirectly associated with the genocidal activities of the Nazis.


This new edition includes history on psychoanalysts in Nazi Germany, postwar developments and conflicts, and discontinuity in German history. The book chronologically follows the development and changes to psychotherapy before and during the Nazi era. Topics include the General Medical Society in the 1920s, the Goring Institute, neurosis and patients during the Nazi era, the Reich Institute, and postwar reconstruction.


In two parts, this book seeks to understand how particular individuals became atrocity-committing members of the SS. Part I first looks at the conceptual foundations of how the individuals came to hold the role in the Holocaust that they did. It then delves into the development of the most prominent contributors, namely the heirs of the Kaiser and the leadership of the SS (also exploring the functioning of the SS). The last portion of Part I details the personal characteristics and affiliations that were selected for in the SS interviews. Part II uses particular cases to paint pictures of five different kinds of SS killers: the Fanatic, the Norm Setters, the Medical Humanitarians, the Privateers, and the Lawyer-turned-Hangman. These case studies are followed by a general analysis of just how it all happened, examining both the necessary psychological states and the process of becoming a killer.


“The Nazi concentration camps forced millions of people in situations of extreme stress, which continues to exert influence decades later. Because of the magnitude of the event, its origins and effects present profound difficulties to scholars, educators, and concerned laypeople. This book overcomes many of those difficulties through a comprehensive, multidisciplinary analysis of the Nazi Holocaust. Scholars from numerous fields have collaborated to approach the phenomenon of the concentration camps from varying angles of perception. The first chapters consider the history of the concentration camps, anti-Semitism, and political opposition to the Nazis in Weimar Germany. The following chapters discuss the fate of the concentration camp survivors, their physical and emotional health, their methods with coping with the stress of the camps, their responses to psychotherapy, and their children’s difficulties in facing such a legacy. The book concludes with the analysis of the Nazis’ behavior. Excerpts from the autobiographies of Goebbels and Hoess present a brief sampling in their world view.
These are followed by psychological studies of the possible determinants of SS behavior.


"The former German Democratic Republic's identification with the antifascist resistance against the Nazi regime permitted much of the social and political responsibility for the crimes of the Third Reich to be avoided. This official position played an important role in shaping the perception of the Nazi past. Survey data gathered in the former East Germany in 1995 and 2000 reveal a complex pattern of acceptance and denial of this historical past. There was a significant shift in the attribution of responsibility for the Holocaust, but no change in the perceptions of grandparents' involvement in it. Results are interpreted with reference to social identity theory, which provides a framework for the understanding of national identity, collective self-esteem and collective memory."


This chapter gives a detailed description of the Dachau concentration camp currently serving as a museum and its appearance during World War II. The camp has changed significantly, as first-hand accounts illustrate the camp’s composition 60 years ago. The end of the chapter includes a drawing of the layout of the camp, and throughout the chapter the main atrocities which occurred at Dachau are explained.


"This paper examines the social environment in which the psychiatric profession evolved in Germany in the period between the bourgeois revolution and the onset of Nazism, and delineates the stages of psychiatric theory which paved the way for the murderous alliance between the profession and the fascist state. To bolster its professional status, psychiatry pretended to adopt the methods of the physical sciences. This led to an exclusive concern with genetically determined etiological factors and a rejection of the potential for therapy. Psychiatric theory thus became an instrument used to legitimate the authoritarian state’s drive to isolate those who threatened to disrupt society or were economically unproductive. This development ultimately strengthened the racial hygiene ideology of the Third Reich and facilitated the extermination of 100,000 mental patients."


According to ratings from the Rorschach inkblot tests, the doctors of the Nazi era were no more mad than the average America citizen. Personalities of the doctors at the Nuremberg trials ranged from severely disturbed to well-adjusted, signifying that even 'normal' people can become entangled in social or political forces.

Part I of this book discusses the perpetrators involved in the Holocaust, starting with Hitler himself, the older officials in the National Socialist party, newer politicians, zealots, vulgarians, doctors and lawyers, and finally non-German governments and volunteers. Each chapter details the involvement and role of one of these parties, encompassing the whole spectrum of those responsible for the destruction of the European Jewry.


This study delves into the ethical questions surrounding the Holocaust. Since genocide is commonly acknowledged as immoral, this book deals with difficult questions such as how were people able to commit mass slaughter, why did so few help the Jews, who exactly is responsible, and how to prevent future genocides. The first part of this book deals with general ethical policy and responsibility, and topics in the psychology of morals. The second half, starting with chapter 5, applies these ethical theories to the Holocaust directly, analyzing the roles of perpetrators, accomplices victims, rescuers, and bystanders. The main moral issues faced by each general category of individuals is discusses in subsequent chapters, in order to generate a relative degree of blame or praise for common actions taken by individual in the previously mentioned categories.


Douglas Kelley served as the psychiatrist for the 22 men held as war criminals during the Nuremberg trials. He analyzed all of the inmates using personality tests such as the Rorschach Test, the Thematic Apperception Tests, and the Wechsler-Bellevue Test. He also interviewed people who had personally known these Nazis during their reign of power. This book presents complete personality studies of each of the 22 men indicted at the Nuremberg Trials, as well as a section on Adolf Hitler.


This articles is a collection of original documents directly approving the exterminating of the Jews and other groups who were targeted in the Holocaust. The collection includes statements from leading Nazis, gas chambers, documents about mass murder, euthanasia of the mentally ill, medical experiments, Auschwitz, Kristallnacht, the verdict of SS-court, and other miscellaneous primary sources.


This investigation into the psychological and social roots of the Holocaust attempts to get at the fundamental driving force of what the authors perceive to be the major crisis of the 20th century. Divided into five parts, the book first the dimensions of the historical crisis, and then seeks to answer the question of, Why Germany?. It then examines the unique role of the SS, the "fallacy of innocence" of victims, and the idea and action of resistance. It concludes with a reflection on the relationship between the Holocaust and the human condition.

While extensive literature exists about victim/therapist relations and countertransference, little research has been done with perpetrators. The author offers his personal experience with about 50 male perpetrators of the Holocaust. His primary reason for working with this population was mainly curiosity, but also to serve as a benevolent listener.


The author conducted a psychological study of medical behavior in Auschwitz, considering the relationship of doctors to the killing process with a focus on biomedical ideology, political ideology, and individual behavior. The study methods, 'biomedical vision' and the euthanasia program for mental patients are discussed. Auschwitz is described, especially the psychological aspects of the camp. The conclusion addresses more general questions about human nature, contemporary bioethics, and life and death control.


"This essay chronicles the little-noted prosecutions of those like Hoess who supplied, staffed, administered, and assisted the German death camps. An overview of the trials of those who deported Jews, provided poison gas, administered and guarded the gulags, conducted medical experiments, enslaved inmates, confiscated valuables, and supervised the camps is provided. This overview is followed by an analysis of the contributions of these cases to the development of an international criminal code, and reflections on the causes and consequences of Nazi criminality."


This collection of essays attempts to "dispel any notions of a parochial Freudian approach cut off from the larger realms of history, ideology, and society when examining the Holocaust" (vi) in order to help prevent any repetition of the terrible historical episode. Offering a number of psychological perspectives, including pieces reflecting on human motivation, aggression, hostility, and perception of reality in an "unreal" world, this anthology presents the psychological horror that accompanied the physical horror of the Holocaust. The book is divided into five sections addressing different psychological themes: Ideological and Cultural Perspectives, Differing Views of Survivorship, A Generation After, and Psychoanalysis and the Holocaust: A Roundtable.


"An analysis of the largest such sample yet assembled, this article surveys the biographies of 1/581 men and women involved in Nazi genocide. The quantitative study
of these perpetrators suggests that they resemble "Real Nazis" more than they do "Ordinary Germans." Most of the Sudeten Germans, the women, and the foreign ethnic-Germans who were recruited only after the Wehrmacht "liberated" their countries did seem relatively "ordinary." But among the remaining ninety percent of the sample, two-thirds were long-term Nazis, a third had been prewar extremists, and "careers" in violence were common. Perpetrators came disproportionately from "core Nazi constituencies." The more committed Nazis were of higher rank and longer experience - bringing the pressures of hierarchy and comradeship to bear on newer recruits. Previous scholars have shown how the Nazi movement was "radicalized" into genocide; biographies of its participants illustrate the social processes, institutional cultures, and power relations involved.


This paper explores the role of German psychiatrists during the Holocaust and the effects on the profession afterwards. Drawing from authors such as Karl Jaspers, Robert Jay Lifton, and Hans Walter Schmuhl, this article outlines the course of involvement of many German psychiatrists in perpetuating the Nazi war crimes, namely the euthanasia program against the mentally ill.


"SS Kommandant Rudolph Hoss (1900 - 1947) was history’s greatest mass murderer, personally supervising the extermination of approximately two million people, mostly Jews, at Auschwitz, the German death camp in Poland. Death Dealer is a new, unexpurgated translation of his autobiography, written before and during Hoss’s trial and while awaiting his execution. Death Dealer stands as one of the most important - and chilling - documents of the Holocaust.”


This is a critical review of Hannah Arendt's 1963 book "Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report of the Banality of Evil". Rosenbaum criticizes Arendt for believing Eichmann's story that he was simply following orders, and how many people simply accept this form of denial rather than properly addressing those responsible for the criminal acts that occurred under the Nazis.


This collection of essays examines the process whereby "social destructiveness is done by people who feel they have some kind of permission for what they do, even to the point of feeling righteous, and who commonly regard their victims as less than human or otherwise beyond the pale" (ix). The editors and contributing authors attempt to "trace the process of destructiveness, showing how dehumanization occurs, how sanctions for evil come to exist, and how people cooperate in doing harm or in failing to prevent it. Drawing on sociology, psychiatry, political theory, psychology, and related fields, the
authors sort out the complexity of the sanctioning process and suggest ways to impede or prevent it" (ix).


Using the primary resources available at the Berlin Document Center, which is the SS archive containing the millions of records of Nazi party membership, combined with a number of personal interviews with ex-soldiers and their families, this book explores how it came to be that Nazi soldiers became "Soldiers of Evil." The personnel files shed light on how certain members of the SS "consented to making terror their profession, and how they were able to implement the murder of millions of people as part of their daily routine" (9). This book tells the story of the 50 commandants and 40,000 camp personnel: "who they were, what brought them to join the Nazi movement, what induced them to enlist in the SS, what brought them to serve in concentration camps and what gave them the relentlessness required of them in their duties" (9).


"The medical professions of Germany and Austria, including academic medicine, played a critical role in the evolution of Nazism's programs of human destruction, programs that culminated in genocide and the exploitation of the dead."


"During the twelve years from 1933 - 1945, the concentration camp operated as a terror society. In this pioneering book, the renowned German sociologist Wolfgang Sofsky looks at the concentration camp from the inside as a laboratory of cruelty and a system of absolute power built on extreme violence, starvation, “terror labor”, and the businesslike extermination of human beings.”


This report, written by the British Working Party, seeks to understand how and why doctors became involved in egregious human rights abuses, namely torture, and how such a recurrence might be prevented in the future. After providing an explanation of the national and international legal and ethical framework governing the work of doctors and considering "the inherent difficulties in obtaining and weighing the evidence in a responsible manner" (3), the report discusses the involvement, motivation for involvement, and ethical status of involvement of medical personnel in torture and other human rights abuses. The last portion of the report attempts to "assess the extent to which medical associations have acted to defend human rights and medical ethics and to give protection to threatened health professionals" (6).

Why do governments or powerful groups in a society foster genocide, mass murder, and other organized acts of violence against a subgroup? This article explores psychological sources, social (life) conditions, and cultural preconditions that contribute to such actions. Difficult life conditions, a common precursor of mistreatment of a group, create frustration, threat to, and attack on life, ways of life, and self-concept. In their need to deal with the psychological effects of difficult life conditions, people often will scapegoat, and turn to ideologies which offer hope but identify some group as an enemy. These and other ways of dealing with the psychological effects of difficult life conditions frequently give rise to violence. Certain characteristics of a culture - such as a belief in cultural superiority, devaluation of, and discrimination against a group, obedience to authority, and other - make this more likely. Once mistreatment has started, participation or passivity by many members of society makes its continuation more likely. Reasons for frequent passivity by bystanders, who have great potential influence, are discussed. The psychology of direct perpetrators is explored, including reversal of morality due to ideology and the assumption of responsibility by leaders. As the conception is presented it is applied to examinations of the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. The possibility of diminishing such cruelty in the world is also discussed.


This book seeks to answer the question of "How can human beings kill multitudes of men and women, children and old people?" (3). The first part goes into the psychology of individual perpetrators, bystanders, and heroic helpers. These concepts are applied to a detailed analysis of the Holocaust in the second part, and to an analysis of other genocides and mass killings in the third. The fourth part discusses how such a conception helps provide an understanding of the origins of war. All this culminates in "an agenda for creating caring and non-aggressive persons and societies" (6).


This article explores the "instigating conditions (difficult life conditions in a society, group conflict); cultural characteristics; the nature of evolution, with its psychological and social processes in individuals and groups; and the passivity and complicity of bystanders that lead to genocide and other collective violence." The main question is whether or not bystanders can be considered evil, and the case of Rwanda is used as a useful example to examine genocide, and examples such as father-daughter incest to examine individual violence. The article analyzes "the socialization and experience of children and youth that lead to aggression and the subsequent evolution of aggression toward greater violence and evil...[and] the way personal characteristics and a system of relationships can lead to sexual abuse." One major concept that the article focuses on is "the frustration of basic human needs and their subsequent destructive fulfillment."

"The Nazi attempt to annihilate the Jewish people ended over 50 yrs ago, but both public and scholarly interest in the Holocaust remains intense and has a salient psychological component. The Holocaust continues to be the setting for many novels, plays, and films, and is also frequently invoked as a metaphor in policy debates such as in justification of the NATO air attacks against Yugoslavia. Holocaust-related psychological research can serve as a basis for better understanding of subsequent, and perhaps of future, ethno-political violence, the focus of the ongoing joint Canadian Psychological Association-American Psychological Association Ethno-political Warfare Initiative. This research includes theories of why people participate in genocide, the analysis of bystander and rescuer behavior, and the development of interventions that may help to prevent or de-escalate ethnic conflicts and to ameliorate their effects. Psychological studies of Holocaust survivors have contributed to our knowledge of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the transmission of trauma to subsequent generations, and the possibility of coping and recovery after extreme stress."


This article is an interview with Professor Goldhagen, author of Hitler's Willing Executioners. As his doctoral dissertation, this book addresses aspects of the Holocaust perpetrators which are not commonly found in the literature, focusing on the actual killers rather than the structures and institutions present during the Nazi era. The first part of the book focuses on three aspects of the perpetrators: the actions of the police battalions, the work camps, and the death marches. The second half deals with the excuses made for Germany's behavior after the war ended.