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Colonial Paradigms of Violence: Comparative Analysis of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Mass Killing

Edited by Michelle Gordon and Rachel O'Sullivan

Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History
Institut für Zeitgeschichte
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WALLSTEIN

Colonial Paradigms of Violence

Comparative Analysis of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Mass Killing

European Holocaust Studies

Edited by Frank Bajohr, Andrea Löw, and Andreas Wirsching

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Michelle Gordon and Rachel O'Sullivan (Editors)

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Introduction: Colonial Paradigms of Violence

In his recent *Geschichte der Gegenwart* contribution titled "The German Catechism," A. Dirk Moses laid out what he sees as the central tenets of Holocaust memory within Germany, of which he argues, "uniqueness" remains front and center.[1] The piece has reopened a highly charged public debate on relinquishing the theory of Holocaust "uniqueness" and the strengths and weaknesses of connecting elements of Nazi Germany's expansion and violence with colonialism.[2] However, these are debates that have been undertaken ever since the events of the Holocaust took place, in some form. More recently, for example, the workshop "Colonial Paradigms of Violence: Comparative Analysis of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Mass Killing," upon which this volume is based, was attended by international historians of the Holocaust, Nazi Germany, colonialism, and imperialism.[3] The central goal of the workshop was to bring together scholars from different academic fields to openly explore the complicated relationship between the Holocaust and colonial violence, without the assumption of a strict theory of Holocaust "uniqueness."[4]

1 A. Dirk Moses, "The German Catechism," *Geschichte der Gegenwart*, May 23, 2021, accessed August 9, 2021, https://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/the-german-catechism/.

2 For the purpose of this article, we will mainly refer to comparisons with colonialism as this is what is usually referred to within the debate. However, comparisons to imperialism are also relevant. We loosely define "colonialism" as a foreign power's political, cultural, and economic rule over a country or colony accompanied by, often permanent, settlement, and exploitation of the area's resources and/or its people.

3 The workshop "Colonial Paradigms of Violence: Comparative Analysis of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Mass Killing" was held in digital form on November 11–13, 2020 and jointly organized by the Center for Holocaust Studies, Leibniz Institute for Contemporary History, Munich and the Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University, Sweden.

4 For the purpose of this article, we use the term "unique" to signify not only the quasi-religious significance that has occasionally been ascribed to the Holocaust by

Moses' "Catechism" piece reflects older arguments on the topic; however, the ongoing aftermath of the discussions which it caused is highly relevant to research which seeks to explore and consider the benefits and challenges of the colonial paradigm for our understanding of the dynamics of mass violence, to test the relevance of colonial and genocidal entanglements.[5] These discussions have thus been a fitting backdrop for our efforts to bring together the final parts of this European Holocaust Studies (EHS) volume. Not only do we hope that this publication will contribute to these important discussions, but we also aim to show both the fruitfulness as well as the challenges of undertaking research that goes beyond the borders of any one particular academic field and the limitations of approaching the Holocaust as an isolated event. As well as introducing the volume and its contributions, this introduction sets the volume within the context of three separate but interlinking debates: the academic debate on comparing the Holocaust and Nazi violence to colonial contexts; the academic debate on the concept of genocide and its relationship to colonialism and colonial violence; and the public debate on the significance of the memory of the Holocaust which is reflected in educational systems and political narratives.

The "Colonial Turn" in Holocaust and Genocide Studies

In his 1944 book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, the Polish lawyer and creator of the term "genocide," Raphael Lemkin, first described the act as involving two phases:

> One, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor. This

historians, but also the numerous other approaches which argue that the Holocaust, or parts of the processes which led to it, are analytically incomparable.

5 There have been numerous responses to this piece. See for example: Frank Bajohr and Rachel O'Sullivan, "Holocaust, Kolonialismus und NS-Imperialismus: Wissenschaftliche Forschung im Schatten einer polemischen Debatte," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 70, no. 1 (2022): 191–202; Yehuda Bauer, "Einen Schlussstrich ziehen, geht einfach nicht," *Berliner Zeitung*, October 8, 2021, accessed November 24, 2021, https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/politik-gesellschaft/holocaustforscher-yehuda-bauer-das-ziel-war-der-massenmord-an-sich-li.187338. And in response: Alon Confino, Amos Goldberg, and Raz Segal, "Israelische Historiker: Kontextualisierung ist noch kein Schlussstrich," *Berliner Zeitung*, October 30, 2021, accessed November 24, 2021, https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/wochenende/israelische-historiker-kontextualisierung-ist-noch-kein-schlussstrich-li.191383.

> imposition, in turn, may be made upon the oppressed population which is allowed to remain, or upon the territory alone, after removal of the population and the colonization of the area by the oppressor's own nationals.[6]

Although the definition of genocide was adjusted when it was adopted as a legal concept by the United Nations (UN) in 1948, Lemkin's unpublished works reveal that, far from solely examining the Holocaust when creating the term, he investigated many instances of colonial and imperial violence spanning across different time periods and continents—he understood genocide as a phenomenon that could be examined comparatively.[7] Aimé Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme*, published in 1950, also highlighted the similarities between colonial violence and the violence of the Nazi regime. In a frequently quoted passage, Césaire explained that what the Christian bourgeois of the twentieth century could not forgive Adolf Hitler for was:

> … not the humiliation of man as such, it [was] the crime against the white man, the humiliation of the white man, and the fact that he applied to Europe colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India, and the blacks of Africa.[8]

Similarly, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, first published in 1951, Hannah Arendt proposed that antisemitism, expansion, and race-thinking were neither German inventions nor were they purely the policies of Nazi ideology. These elements were also present in European imperial history; according to Arendt, they crystallized into totalitarianism.[9] By describing colonialism as a "boomerang" that had returned to Europe in the form

6 Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Clark: The Lawbook Exchange Ltd, 2008), 79.

7 See for example: A. Dirk Moses, "Raphael Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide," in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, ed. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19–41.

8 Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1955), 13. This echoed a similar argument made by W. E. B. Du Bois: "There was no Nazi atrocity … which the Christian civilization of Europe had not been practicing against coloured folk in all parts of the world in the name of and for the defense of a Superior Race born to rule the world." W. E. B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa and Color and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15.

9 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 4th ed. (New York: Harcourt, 1973).

of fascism, the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre elucidated the notion of colonial and imperial violence returning to Europe in equally violent forms. "It comes back on us, it strikes us, and we do not realize any more than we did the other times that it's we that have launched it," he wrote.[10]

In the early 2000s, historians began to address the idea of the "return" of violence to Europe by exploring continuities and similarities to explain how the Nazi regime and the Holocaust were either potentially influenced by colonial ideology and practices or whether they were imitations of such. The work of colonial historian, Jürgen Zimmerer, most notably the book *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz* (From Windhoek to Auschwitz, 2011), provided an important contribution and impetus to the debate through his argument that identifiable continuities existed between the *Kaiserreich*'s (German Empire, 1871–1919) rule over colonies in Africa, notably the genocide of the Herero and Nama, and Nazi Germany's perpetration of the Holocaust.[11] In their similarly titled books, Mark Mazower (*Hitler's Empire*, 2008) and Shelly Baranowski (*Nazi Empire*, 2011) both investigated the relationship between empire-building, imperial rivalries, and violence when attempting to explain how the Nazi intercontinental empire's formation related to older models.[12] Other historians such as Donald Bloxham, Dan Stone, and Pascal Grosse approached the interlinking of colonialism and Nazi Germany from a

10 Jean-Paul Sarte, "Preface," in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 20. The book was originally published in French as *Les Damnés de la terre* (Paris: François Maspero, 1961).

11 Helmut Bley first explored the idea of the genocide of the Herero and Nama (1904–1908) as a model for the Holocaust in 1968; however, Jürgen Zimmerer's work still remains one of the most well-known within the debate. See: Helmut Bley, *Kolonialherrschaft und Sozialstruktur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1894–1914* (Hamburg: Leipniz Verlag, 1968); Jürgen Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (Münster: LIT, 2011). See also: Benjamin Madley, "From Africa to Auschwitz: How German South West Africa Incubated Ideas and Methods Adopted and Developed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe," *European History Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2005): 429–62. For historiographical overviews of the debate, see for example: Matthew Fitzpatrick, "The Pre-History of the Holocaust? The *Sonderweg* and *Historikerstreit* Debates and the Abject Colonial Past," *Central European History* 41, no. 3 (2008): 477–503; Thomas Kühne, "Colonialism and the Holocaust: Continuities, Causations, and Complexities," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15, no. 3 (2013): 339–62.

12 Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008); Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismarck to Hitler* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For a study focusing on Ukraine, see: Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina University Press, 2005).

standpoint that placed less emphasis on Germany's prior colonial experience and more emphasis on wider European patterns and norms.[13] As Grosse argued, "German colonialism was less a prerequisite for the emergence of National Socialist racial policies than an expression of the same intellectual eugenicist model at an earlier time and in a different historical setting." Thus, he recognized German colonialism and Nazism as part of the same European conceptual framework which demanded a racial ordering of the state and its expansion.[14] However, the premise of the debate, particularly the thesis of "colonial continuities" from the *Kaiserreich*, was extensively questioned and criticized at the time by historians such as Birthe Kundrus, Robert Gerwarth, and Stephan Malinowski who called for a greater focus on empirical evidence as opposed to a reliance on theoretical discussions.[15]

Within the academic field of Holocaust Studies, comparative approaches to the Holocaust are still, to this day, met with resistance from certain scholars who dispute the usefulness of such analysis. For some historians, but also politicians and members of the public, the Holocaust was "fundamentally" different from other historical crimes.[16] Indeed, notions that genocide equals Holocaust have meant that some Holocaust scholars have gone so far as to accuse critics of the "uniqueness" approach

13 See for example: Donald Bloxham, *The Final Solution: A Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) and Stone's newer publication *Fascism, Nazism and the Holocaust*: *Challenging Histories* (London and New York: Routledge, 2021); Pascal Grosse, "What does German Colonialism Have to Do with National Socialism? A Conceptual Framework," in *Germany's Colonial Pasts*, ed. Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz, and Lora Wildenthal (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 115–34. See also the contributions in Sybille Steinbacher, ed., *Holocaust und Völkermorde: Die Reichweite des Vergleichs* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2012).

14 Grosse, "What does German Colonialism Have to Do with National Socialism?" 128–9.

15 See for example: Birthe Kundrus, "From the Herero to the Holocaust? Some Remarks on the Current Debate," *Africa Spectrum* 40, no. 2 (2005): 299–308; Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski, "Hannah Arendt's Ghosts: Reflections on the Disputable Path from Windhoek to Auschwitz," *Central European History* 42, no. 2 (2009): 279–300.

16 For example, Steffen Klävers' recent book takes issue with the arguments of Jürgen Zimmerer, A. Dirk Moses, and Michael Rothberg. See: Steffen Klävers, *Decolonizing Auschwitz? Komparativ-postkoloniale Ansätze in der Holocaustforschung* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019). See also: Saul Friedländer's response to Moses' "Catechism," Saul Friedländer, "Ein fundamentales Verbrechen," *Die Zeit*, July 7, 2021, accessed October 21, 2021, https://www.zeit.de/2021/28/holocaust-gedenken-erinnerungskultur-genozid-kolonialverbrechen?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.de%2F.

of antisemitism and Holocaust denial.[17] Notwithstanding, both the debate on colonial continuities and similarities and also the usefulness of colonial or imperial terminology for explaining elements of Nazi Germany's expansion have been embedded into Holocaust Studies and research on the history of National Socialism for decades. Regarding terminology, numerous scholars continue to refer to aspects of Nazi rule using colonial terms and language, for example, Nazi Germany's "empire," its "colonization" of Eastern Europe, its "colonies," or the "colony" of the General Government in occupied Poland.[18] These scholars often do not explicitly locate their work within the margins of the wider discussions on colonial continuities and similarities, nor do they discuss why they chose these terms. Similarly, they do not always explain if they intended to imply that the Nazi regime was practicing colonialism or imperialism. In some cases, scholars use colonial or imperial terms or language yet, within their argument, they deny, question or disregard comparability. Undoubtedly, some scholars do mention their reasoning behind their choice of terms. However, it is interesting to note how these colonial descriptors have largely become part of academic parlance in relation to Nazi Germany's expansion. This, in itself, is significant as it highlights how, even if only linguistically or idiomatically, colonialism and imperialism appear to offer terminological contexts for an explanation of Nazi Germany's territorial growth and rule.

17 On the former see: A. Dirk Moses, "Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the 'Racial Century': Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust," in *Colonialism and Genocide*, ed. A. Dirk Moses and Dan Stone (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 156. On the latter: Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust*, 207.

18 See for example: Wolfgang Gippert, "Danzig-West Prussia," in *The Greater German Reich and the Jews: Nazi Persecution Policies in the Annexed Territories 1935–1945*, ed. Wolf Gruner and Jörg Osterloh, trans. Bernard Heise (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 173; Alex J. Kay, *Empire of Destruction: A History of Nazi Mass Killing* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2021); and other terminological references throughout publications such as: Christian Ingrao, *The Promise of the East: Nazi Hopes and Genocide, 1939–43*, trans. Andrew Brown (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019); Karl R. Kegler, *Deutsche Raumplanung. Das Modell der "Zentralen Orte" zwischen NS-Staat und Bundesrepublik* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2015). For criticisms of the related "othering" of Eastern European space in Holocaust Studies, see Aleksandra Szczepan's contribution to this volume: "Terra Incognita? Othering East-Central Europe in Holocaust Studies," in *Colonial Paradigms of Violence: Comparative Analysis of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Mass Killing*, ed. Michelle Gordon and Rachel O'Sullivan (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2022), 185–214.

In addition to the linguistic comparisons drawn by historians, empirical inquiry into colonial similarities is ongoing. Newer research on the debate has increasingly moved away from analyzing direct continuity and instead embraces colonial comparisons as being equally informative and significant to understanding how Nazi Germany's racially motivated domination of both people and land functioned. Such investigations strive to identify exactly where Nazi Germany's occupation tactics, which were inherent to German violence and rule over territories and people, overlap with tactics or norms fundamental to colonial violence and rule.[19] Much of this research does not solely focus on violence or the exclusion of certain groups, however. Rather, scholars attempt to provide a more comprehensive comparative investigation of the Nazi ideological system as a whole and the establishment of not only German political rule but also the racially stratified German society in the annexed and occupied territories. Such research highlights the replication of specific colonial perceptions and tactics within Nazi Germany's inclusionary population policies towards certain groups, such as the ethnic German "resettlers" (*Umsiedler*) or the candidates selected for re-Germanization procedures (*Wiedereindeutschungsverfahren*). Additionally, such studies demonstrate how, both in Nazi Germany and in colonial contexts, the fantasy of racially reordering an ethnically heterogeneous society was often burdened with numerous difficulties when applied in reality.[20] Other historians have begun to place the Holocaust and colonialism within wider contexts of representation and memory culture and, through their work, they shed light on how knowledge of the Holocaust and/or knowledge of colonial violence can act as complementary, or indeed contrasting, analytical frameworks.[21] As highlighted in this EHS volume, research that uses

19 See for example: Michelle Gordon, "Colonial Violence and Holocaust Studies," *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History* 21, no. 4 (2015): 272–91; Ido de Haan, "Imperialism, Colonialism and Genocide: The Dutch Case for an International History of the Holocaust," *BMGN—Low Countries Historical Review* 125, no. 2/3 (2010): 301–27.

20 See: Bradley J. Nichols, "The Hunt for Lost Blood: Nazi Germanization Policy in Occupied Europe" (PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 2016); Nichols, "The Re-Germanization Procedure: A Domestic Model for Nazi Empire-Building," *German Historical Institute Bulletin* 62 (2018): 69–91; Rachel O'Sullivan, "Integration and Division: Nazi Germany and the 'Colonial Other' in Annexed Poland," *Journal of Genocide Research* 22, no. 4 (2020): 437–58.

21 For example, in relation to the representation of genocide on film, see: Rebecca Jinks, *Representing Genocide: The Holocaust as Paradigm?* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016). Edward Kissi has explored how the Holocaust was perceived and the ways in which it is remembered by (former) colonized and sovereign people in different African countries. See: Edward Kissi, *Africans and the Holocaust: Per-*

comparative analysis of the Holocaust, genocide, and mass killing can approach the question of the existence of wider European frameworks and general patterns of violence from a variety of angles.

While more recent developments in the field of comparative genocide studies have pointed to the intrinsic relationship between colonialism and genocide, a focus on "colonial genocide" was initially disregarded owing to the overemphasis of political scientists in the 1980s on the role of the state as the perpetrator of genocide.[22] This emphasis is problematic because colonial genocide was often perpetrated by settlers on the ground, a process which also makes issues of intent all the more difficult to determine and prove, not least owing to arguments of violence and death as an "unintended consequence" of the colonial policies of metropoles.[23] An ongoing challenge for scholars exploring these issues is the persistence of popular notions of public and academic understandings of the Holocaust as the archetypal genocide—the "yardstick" by which to measure and determine whether genocide has taken place. Indeed, the Holocaust continues to be viewed as the "paradigmatic" genocide, a "unique" or extreme event that cannot be understood within wider processes of history, contexts or other cases of violence. That genocide is viewed by some as a redundant concept in relation to studies of colonialism, is perhaps encapsulated in this statement by one historian who responded to the *Bringing Them Home Report* (1997) in Australia, a report that argued the state-led forced removal of Indigenous children was genocide, thus:

> When I see the word "genocide," I still see Gypsies and Jews being herded into trains, into pits into ravines, and behind them the shadowy figures of Armenian women and children being marched into the desert by armed men. I see deliberate mass murder: innocent people identified by their killers as distinctive entities being done to death by

ceptions and Responses of Colonized and Sovereign Peoples (London and New York: Routledge, 2020). See also: Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); or the recent German translation: Michael Rothberg, *Multidirektionale Erinnerung. Holocaustgedenken im Zeitalter der Dekolonisierung*, trans. Max Henninger (Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2021).

22 Dan Stone, "Defending the Plural: Hannah Arendt and Genocide Studies," *New Formations* 71 (2011): 52.

23 For example, in the context of colonial Australia, see: A. Dirk Moses, "An Antipodean Genocide? The Origins of the Genocidal Moment in Australia," *Journal of Genocide Research* 2, no. 1 (2000): 89–106; Tony Barta, "Decent Disposal: Australian Historians and the Recovery of Genocide," in *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 296–322.

> organized authority. I believe that to take the murder out of genocide is to render it vacuous.[24]

However, as genocide scholars have repeatedly shown, and indeed, Lemkin's original definition suggested, one does not need gas chambers and crematoria to commit genocide. Commonalities between the Holocaust and other genocides, and wider colonial mass violence, exist beyond the topic of so-called "industrial" killing which, in the academic and public sphere, has often obscured the prevalence and significance of face-to-face killing during the Holocaust.[25] Hence, there are many other aspects of the Holocaust, and other Nazi genocidal policies, that were reminiscent of European colonial practices and can be comparatively analyzed.

The "Genocide Turn" in Colonial and Imperial History

Reluctance to address these similarities and to view European colonial violence and the Holocaust as part of a continuum in which we can view the latter within a wider context of precedents, practices, and targeted group destruction is not solely the purview of certain Holocaust scholars. Many colonial historians also shy away or openly dispute the use of the concept of genocide in their analyzes of European colonialism. For some scholars, genocide and its relevance for colonial contexts is an "anachronistic question."[26] For others, the question of genocide and settler violence has reached an "intellectual impasse," and the usefulness of genocide as a concept for understanding colonial violence has been

24 Inga Clendinnen, "First Contact," *The Australian's Review of Books* (May 2001): 6–7. Meredith Wilkie, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (Sydney: Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997). For recent discussion on genocide as a concept see: A. Dirk Moses, *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

25 See: Dan Stone, "Beyond the 'Auschwitz Syndrome': Holocaust Historiography after the Cold War," *Patterns of Prejudice* 44, no. 5 (2010): 457. On the movement away from a scholarly focus on the impersonal, bureaucratic, and mechanical processes of killing, see for example: Frank Bajohr und Andrea Löw, "Tendenzen und Probleme der neueren Holocaust-Forschung: Eine Einführung," in *Der Holocaust: Ergebnisse und neue Fragen der Forschung*, ed. Frank Bajohr and Andrea Löw (Frankfurt a. M.: S. Fischer Verlag, 2015), 14–16.

26 Jordanna Bailkin, "The Boot and the Spleen: When Was Murder Possible in British India?" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48, no. 2 (2006): 467.

questioned.[27] Some scholars of empire choose to use other frames of reference to understand colonial violence, such as "massacre" or "atrocities," to further our understanding of the dynamics of mass violence.[28] However, some studies by historians of empire are lacking in open engagement with the violence of European empires, or take a rather unhelpful "balance-sheet" approach, which considers empires in terms of a tally of "good" and "bad" outcomes, invariably emphasizing the "positive" effects of empire, at the expense of genuine attempts to understand the realities of colonialism, the violence it entailed, and its long-term impact.[29]

More recent literature on genocide and colonialism has demonstrated the intrinsic connection between the two, believing genocide to always be colonial.[30] Some scholars have gone so far as to argue that settler colonialism is *inherently* genocidal.[31] Dynamics on the ground seem to be key here, for example, as Patrick Wolfe's important work has shown us, much depends on the extent to which the invading/occupying powers wanted or needed an Indigenous labor force. However, it is the case that both Holocaust Studies and comparative genocide studies have much to tell us about understanding mass violence and the racial hierarchies

27 In the Australian case for example, an insightful discussion is, Philip G. Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan, "Reflections on Genocide and Settler-Colonial Violence," *History Australia* 13, no. 3 (2016): 335–50.

28 Philip G. Dwyer and Lyndall Ryan, ed., *Theatres of Violence: Massacre, Mass Killing and Atrocity throughout History* (New York: Berghahn, 2012); Sönke Neitzel and Daniel Hohrath, eds., *Kriegsgreuel: die Entgrenzung der Gewalt in kriegerischen Konflikten vom Mittelalter bis ins 20. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008).

29 See for example, the exchange between Duncan Bell and John Darwin: "Roundtable: Imperial History by the Book: A Roundtable on John Darwin's *The Empire Project*," *Journal of British Studies* 54, no. 4 (2015): 987–97; Matthew Reisz: "Oxford Project's 'Balance-Sheet View' of Colonialism Criticised," *Times Higher Education,* December 22, 2017, accessed December 22, 2017, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/oxford-projects-balance-sheet-view-colonialism-criticised.

30 See for example: Jürgen Zimmerer, "Nationalsozialismus postkolonial: Plädoyer zur Globalisierung der deutschen Gewaltgeschichte," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 57, no. 6 (2009): 534.

31 Norbert Finzsch, "'The Aborigines …Were Never Annihilated, and Still They Are Becoming Extinct': Settler Imperialism and Genocide in Nineteenth-Century America and Australia," in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York: Berghahn, 2010 [2008]), 253–70; John Docker, "Are Settler-Colonies Inherently Genocidal? Re-Reading Lemkin," in *Empire, Colony, Genocide*, ed. Moses, 81–101; Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409; Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001): 866–905.

and racial targeting that it entails. Scholars taking this approach are as interested in the significance of colonialism as they are in the Holocaust, and the relationship between the two is but one part of this focus. The aim is neither to present the Holocaust as a "yardstick of violence," nor to hold up the Holocaust as the event that everything else has to be studied in relation to. European empires and the violence that was perpetrated is being studied in a myriad of ways, based on archival research, to discern the levels of extreme violence that have been overlooked for decades.[32] Within these histories, the Holocaust is but one part. Indeed, the central emphasis of studies that explore colonial genocide is not solely or even primarily to contribute to our understanding of the history of Europe and its specific relationship with genocidal violence, before it was carried out by Nazi Germany on European soil. Instances of genocide and atrocity that took place in the colonies deserve scholarly attention in their own right, in order to correct a persistent imbalance.[33]

There is a renewed focus on European empires, and their legacies, of which not all were genocidal. But they were invariably violent, and the threat of violence remained throughout. New academic research is therefore embracing a wider approach to these topics. Important research is now being undertaken that heeds the calls made in relation to the "colonial continuity thesis" and the aforementioned criticisms thereof for more empirically based, synchronic comparisons of colonial violence and for further in-depth enquiry into individual cases of colonial brutality, thereby moving beyond theory-based approaches to this topic. Further studies of European colonial violence based on archival research are essential so that comparative research can be undertaken, which will enhance our understanding of the development of European traditions of violence both within and outside of the colonies. These studies are taking a range of aspects and focuses of violence, from the inception of the colonial relationship until decolonization. They focus not only on the "usual suspect" of settler violence but also on cases of "administrative colonialism" which were often brought about by violent processes of colonization cumulating in one-sided massacres to cower Indigenous

32 For a different interpretation, see: Mads Bomholt Nielsen, "Contextualising Colonial Violence: Causality, Continuity and the Holocaust," *History Compass* 19, no. 12 (2021): no pagination.

33 There are exceptions to a more traditional approach to colonial history, such as V. G. Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes to Other Cultures in the Imperial Age* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015 [1969]).

resistance against European colonial rule.[34] The colonial relationship was often "bookended" by extreme violence, as well as the quotidian violence perpetrated by colonial states.[35] Again, while not always genocidal in nature, mass violence was apparent, as were "moments" of genocidal potentiality; such potentiality was present not only in settler colonialism but also in the one-sided massacres that were perpetrated by Europeans to "pacify" perceived recalcitrant "natives."[36]

National "Exceptions" of Violence

Significantly, recent empirical research seeks to call into question approaches of national exception, upon which the "colonial continuity thesis" or "colonial *Sonderweg*" are based.[37] The latter assumes that German colonialism was more violent than its European counterparts; however, this was not the case, as empirical studies are now showing. This particular "colonial continuity thesis" comes in marked contrast to earlier approaches regarding the German colonial past, which, as Zimmerer discusses, was a largely neglected topic; and where German colonialism was acknowledged, it had been treated as "less violent" than its British and French counterparts.[38] Now the extreme violence perpetrated in the

34 Dominik J. Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer, "Settlers, Imperialism, Genocide: Seeing the Global Without Ignoring the Local," *Journal of Genocide Research* 10, no. 2 (2008): 191–9; Kim A. Wagner, "Savage Warfare: Violence and the Rule of Colonial Difference in Early British Counterinsurgency," *History Workshop Journal* 85, no. 1 (2018): 217–37; Michelle Gordon, *Extreme Violence and the "British Way": Colonial Warfare in Perak, Sierra Leone and Sudan* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020). Revisionist studies on decolonization in a British context have been key to highlighting the extreme colonial violence perpetrated until the bitter end, and of particular note are: Caroline Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005) and David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005).

35 See: Jill C. Bender, *The 1857 Indian Uprising and the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Elizabeth Kolsky, *Colonial Justice in British India: White Violence and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Gordon, *Extreme Violence*, 121.

36 As well as Moses, "An Antipodean Genocide?" see: Mark Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation State, Volume II: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 52.

37 See: Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust*, 237.

38 Jürgen Zimmerer, "Colonial Genocide: The Herero and Nama War (1904–1908) in German South West Africa and its Significance," in *Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Stone, 329.

Kaiserreich is central to the debates and much of the scholarship; however, the *Kaiserreich* was not "uniquely" violent, but rather, as in other empires, the dynamics of extreme violence were subject to the conditions on the ground.[39] As well as studies that illuminate the extreme nature of violence across European empires, these debates have also led to studies that demonstrate that there were clearer examples of inspiration for Hitler than German colonialism, for example, and speak to Kundrus' argument that the British Empire, for National Socialism in the 1930s, was a "sounding board."[40]

Newer trends in imperial history that benefit from comparative studies of mass violence, include a more global approach, focusing on trans-imperialism and studies of networks, knowledge, and interconnectivity.[41] These methodological and theoretical approaches can contribute to bridging the gaps between colonial and intra-European violence through our understanding of "colonial archives" of violence or imperial "clouds," as scholars have discussed in relation to phenomena including concentration camps, racial ideologies and mentalities of violence, and trans-imperial/transnational personnel exchanges, to name a few.[42] The field of imperial history is thriving and its interdisciplinary approach comes in marked contrast to the earlier state of the field which, as historian Tony Ballantyne already acknowledged in 2002, was "a once moribund field that seemed near obsolescence in the late 1970s and early 1980s," and which, he continues "has re-emerged as an important and rejuve-

39 See for example: Susanne Kuss, *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence*, trans. Andrew Smith (London: Harvard University Press, 2017); Tanja Bührer, "Kriegführung in Deutsch-Ostafrika (1889–1914)," in *Imperialkriege von 1500 bis heute: Strukturen – Akteure – Lernprozesse*, ed. Tanja Bührer, Christian Stachelbeck, and Dierk Walter (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2011), 197–215.

40 Lora Wildenthal, Jürgen Zimmerer, Russell A. Berman, Jan Rüger, Bradley Naranch, and Birthe Kundrus, "Forum: The German Colonial Imagination," *German History* 26, no. 2 (2008): 269. On the British Empire as an example for the German case, see: Ulrike Lindner, *Koloniale Begegnungen: Deutschland und Großbritannien als Imperialmächte in Afrika 1880–1914* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus Verlag, 2011).

41 For example, Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovski, eds., *Imperial Co-operation and Transfer, 1870–1930: Empires and Encounters* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

42 On concentration camps: Dan Stone, *Concentration Camps: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Jonas Kreienbaum and Aidan Forth, "A Shared Malady: Concentration Camps in the British, Spanish, American and German Empires," *Journal of Modern European History* 14, no. 2 (2016): 245–67.

nated academic field and even a topic of public concern."[43] This public concern has become all the clearer in light of "Rhodes Must Fall," the Black Lives Matter protests and the calls for a "decolonization" of institutions, in which European states are being held to account by the previously colonized in relation to the return of loot and restitution for example.[44]

The Holocaust, Colonialism, and Imperialism in the Public Sphere

With regards to histories of violence, Holocaust Studies has arguably done as much to illuminate as to obscure other histories of mass violence. We can identify a dual process that has been underway in recent years, in which the darker sides of European colonialism have been underplayed, and the horrors of the Holocaust brought into central focus. It is the Holocaust that has come to form part of official European memory, owing to the Stockholm Declaration of 2000 (The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) which placed the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides at the center of European memory.[45] In the case of the United Kingdom for example (though the context of Brexit undoubtedly also needs to be taken into consideration), the British Empire has often been portrayed as "benevolent" and used to create a supposedly positive "British identity" based on pride. At the same time, as several historians have highlighted, the history of the Holocaust has produced a "screen memory" effect, obscuring other histories of violence.[46] However, as Dan Stone observes, "it is precisely this focus on the Holocaust that has encouraged a reconsideration of the question of genocide in imperial history."[47] Nevertheless, it is the case that former colonial metropoles

43 Tony Ballantyne, "Introduction: Debating Empire," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 3, no. 1 (2002): no pagination.

44 See for example in a British context: Jason Arday and Heidi Safia Mirza, eds., *Dismantling Race in Higher Education: Racism, Whiteness and Decolonising the Academy* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018).

45 See for example: Tomislav Dulic, ed., *Memories in Conflict: Historical Trauma, Collective Memory and Justice Since 1989* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2020).

46 Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*.

47 Dan Stone, "Britannia Waives the Rules: British Imperialism and Holocaust Memory," in *History, Memory and Mass Atrocity: Essays on the Holocaust and Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone (Portland, OR: Valentine Mitchell, 2006), 189.

have often failed to grasp and explore their connections as fundamentally post-genocidal societies.[48]

Certainly, debates have emerged within Germany related to Holocaust memory and national identity and in some quarters, the Holocaust is to remain a thoroughly *German* crime. As well as Moses' "Catechism" debate, important developments in the current conversation include the public discussions around the accusations of antisemitism made against the Cameroonian scholar of postcolonial theory Achille Mbembe and the demands to withdraw his invitation as the opening speaker for the Ruhrtriennale festival in 2020.[49] Michael Rothberg's seminal work on memory studies and the Holocaust, *Multidirectional Memory*, which has been recently translated into German, has also reinvigorated these debates.[50] As Moses reminds us, in Germany, assumptions of certain degrees of "uniqueness" have been largely integral to Holocaust memory in the public and political sphere.[51] This focus on Holocaust memorialization and education dominates when compared to the discussions of German colonial violence and attempts at the "decolonization" of institutions and cities. As it currently stands, many German schools do not teach students about Germany's colonial past; if they do, they often do so only marginally—more specifically, decisions on what aspects to teach are usually made by individual teachers and not at state level.[52] At the time of writing, a Change.org petition advocating the teaching of German colonial history and Black history in schools in North Rhine-Westphalia has reached over one hundred and twenty thousand signatures.[53]

Furthermore, the particular German experience of educating about and remembering the Holocaust is widely replicated across Europe, the latter most notably on Holocaust Memorial Day. Rooted in such official

48 See for example, on Britain: Tom Lawson, *The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014).

49 For more on these discussions, see for example the contributions to the *Journal of Genocide Research* Forum: "The Achille Mbembe Controversy and the German Debate About Antisemitism, Israel, and the Holocaust," *Journal of Genocide Research* 23, no. 3 (2021): 371–435.

50 Rothberg, *Multidirektionale Erinnerung*.

51 Moses, "The German Catechism."

52 For public discussions on this topic, see for example: Peter Hille, "Kolonialgeschichte: kein Platz im Unterricht?" *Deutsche Welle*, October 8, 2020, accessed November 30, 2021, https://www.dw.com/de/kolonialgeschichte-kein-platz-im-unterricht/a-55200764.

53 "Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte & 'Black History' sowie Anti-Rassismus in NRW unterrichten!" Change.org Petition, accessed November 30, 2021, https://www.change.org/p/deutsche-kolonialgeschichte-black-history-sowie-anti-rassismus-in-nrw-unterrichten-rassismus-blacklivesmatter-blackhistoryindeutschland.

commemorations, and their accompanying educational efforts, is the assumption that learning the "lesson" of the Holocaust, in the United Kingdom at least, makes for "better" citizens.[54] In fact, educational efforts are so significant that, as the UK Holocaust Educational Trust website states, in England, "the Holocaust is the only historical event whose study is compulsory on the National Curriculum."[55] This approach reflects a problematic part of national understandings of history from a British perspective; the argument goes that where Britain was involved, they "stood alone" and rescued where they could. Undoubtedly, public debates, in the United Kingdom but also in Germany, Europe, and the United States, lag behind those of academics, and somehow, we need to try and bridge this gap in the future.[56] Important steps are, however, gradually being taken in terms of "decolonization" and acknowledging that national histories are entangled with those of the previously colonized.[57] Despite this, there is still often a lack of political will to commit to national histories and narratives which go beyond "pride" in one's colonial past, not least because this can have real financial repercussions in the courts, though this rarely seems to have been the case.[58] As Rothberg reminds us, memory is not a zero-sum game, and neither is historical research; more of one does not have to mean less of the other. Indeed, no one is arguing that we need less attention to the Holocaust, but rather more national nuanced historical accounts and public debates

54 See for example: Donald Bloxham, "Britain's Holocaust Memorial Days: Reshaping the Past in the Service of the Present," *Immigrants & Minorities* 21, no. 1/2 (2002): 41–62.

55 "Holocaust Education in the UK," *Holocaust Education Trust Website*, accessed November 30, 2021, https://www.het.org.uk/about/holocaust-education-uk.

56 See the Roundtable in this volume for further discussion: Edward Kissi, Tom Lawson, Ulrike Lindner, and Mirjam Zadoff, "A European *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*? New Entanglements of Holocaust and Colonial Histories," in *Colonial Paradigms of Violence*, ed. Gordon and O'Sullivan, 217–40.

57 The Windrush scandal being one case in point. Gurminder K. Bhambra, "Racial Hierarchy and Migration in Britain: Windrush 70th Anniversary Series," *Media Diversified*, June 25, 2018, accessed August 18, 2020: https://mediadiversified.org/2018/06/25/racial-hiearchy-andmigration-in-britain-windrush-70th-anniversary-series/.

58 See: Caroline Elkins, "Alchemy of Evidence: Mau Mau, the British Empire, and the High Court of Justice," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 39, no. 5 (2011): 731–48; Caroline Elkins, "Britain Has Said Sorry to the Mau Mau. The Rest of the Empire Is Still Waiting," *The Guardian*, June 7, 2013. On the German apology and reparations to the Herero and Nama peoples: Philip Oltermann, "Germany Agrees to Pay Namibia €1.1bn over Historical Herero-Nama Genocide," *The Guardian*, May 28, 2021.

on individual histories and their entangled legacies of violence. As Stone has stated in his observations on recent developments in these German debates,

> Even if there was no direct line "from Africa to Auschwitz," seeing Nazism as unconnected to Europe's wider histories of colonialism and race thinking is to quarantine it in a way that de-historicis\zes it, preserving it in aspic, unable to inform the present.[59]

The Volume

As mentioned above, the basis for this volume is the "Colonial Paradigms of Violence" workshop, held in digital form in November 2020. Like the workshop, this volume brings together scholars from different academic fields and demonstrates how the entanglements of Nazi Germany's expansion, violence, and the Holocaust, and colonialism and imperialism can be analyzed and discussed in original ways when scholars from different academic areas join together to assess the common strengths and weaknesses of the debate. In this volume's first contribution, Dorota Glowacka highlights important considerations within a distinct part of the debate on entanglements between Holocaust and colonial histories. She investigates how, in North America, notions of the "vanished world" of Eastern European Jews and its proximity to the settler colonial metaphor of "the vanishing Native American" reveals a problematic colonial mindset entrenched in North American perceptions of the Holocaust. Such perceptions strongly relate to traces of Western cultural superiority over "vanishing" groups and cultures. Through her research, Glowacka suggests that the concept of cultural genocide, which was not included in the 1948 UN Convention's definition of genocide, is useful for the recognition and analysis of the attempted annihilation of Eastern European Jews. As Glowacka argues, such annihilation did not purely reflect Nazi Germany's desire to murder Jews, but also their desire to wipe out Jewish culture.

The definition of genocide is not a straightforward one and the concept of genocide, which was created by Lemkin, has extremely complex roots. Related to Glowaka's investigation of the concept of cultural

59 Dan Stone, "In Germany, Coming to Terms with Its Past Is an Ongoing Struggle," *Rantt Media*, April 27, 2021, accessed November 16, 2021, https://rantt.com/in-germany-coming-to-terms-with-its-past-is-an-ongoing-struggle.

genocide, and how it can be used for a greater understanding of elements of the Holocaust, sociologist Jack Palmer examines the complex background of the coining of the term. By including the contexts in which Lemkin investigated, conceptualized, and understood genocide, the *aporias* of the concept become apparent. These aporias are not only significant when we consider how the term genocide applies to instances of colonial mass killing, but also how the entanglements of different histories, locations, and events exist within our understanding of the Holocaust as genocide.

The debate on entanglements between the Holocaust and colonial violence has largely moved away from discussions of direct continuity from the *Kaiserreich* to the Third Reich; however, Sarah Ehlers demonstrates that an investigation of personal continuities can be beneficial to our understanding of how skills and career experience gained in colonies in Africa were reapplied during the Third Reich to the detriment of Jewish victims. Ehlers highlights how three medical doctors, Claus Schilling, Robert Kudicke, and Gerhard Rose, maintained successful careers despite Germany's political changes over time. Although Nazi Germany lacked overseas colonies, these doctors were able to conduct unethical human experiments on ghetto and camp prisoners during the Second World War, often with little consideration for the impact of such experiments on the individuals, just as they had once done on Africans in the colonies. As argued from a theoretical standpoint by Arendt amongst others, colonialism and imperialism appeared to return to Europe in the form of fascism. In a similar but empirically-focused way, Ehler's chapter demonstrates a literal return of German doctors from the colonies in Africa to Europe and the ensuing resurgence of their research on European human test subjects.

Similarly, in his contribution, Ángel Alcalde explores the return of Spanish colonial violence in Morocco to Spain in the form of extreme violence and mass killing by anti-republican rebel troops during the Spanish Civil War. By examining the historical links between Spanish colonial warfare and the Spanish Civil War, Alcalde highlights the potential of a Spanish path of violence from the colonies to the metropole, as evidenced, for example, in Badajoz, where approximately three thousand civilians were murdered by Francisco Franco's "African" troops—men who had garnered first-hand experience of colonial warfare in the Spanish colonies.

Carroll P. Kakel, III explores how colonial violence, and also expansion, returned to Europe through rhetoric, fantasy, and linguistic justification by approaching the debate through the lens of North American

settler colonialism. By analyzing speeches and statements by Hitler and other leading National Socialist Party figures, Kakel assesses how the North American settler colonial "model" for settlement and violence acted as inspiration for significant German fantasies of *Lebensraum* in Eastern Europe. Kakel argues that particularly Hitler was informed by a romanticized view of the American "Wild West" and used references to North America as a way to legitimate violence and expansion to both public and private audiences, at home in Germany and abroad.

Remaining with the focus on settler colonial frameworks of analysis, in her chapter, Jadwiga Biskupska uses a theoretically-focused investigation of the case of the Lublin region and the city of Zamość in occupied Poland, and applies the idea of the setter colonial model to the settlement and violence in these areas. A settler colony often differs from an exploitative colony in that its reason for existence is not solely trade, labor, or resources. As discussed above, the nature of the violence related to settler colonialism often linked to the extent to which the settlers valued an Indigenous labor force. Hence, the settler colony exists through the replacement and thereby complete removal of the Indigenous population, by the occupier's settlers. Biskupska argues that by utilizing settler colonialism as a lens through which to investigate the region between 1940 and early 1944, important elements of the instability, violence, and planned German settlement come to light.

In the final research article of this volume, Aleksandra Szczepan's argument links back to Glowacka's opening article on certain pitfalls of colonial comparisons and perceptions by recent and contemporary scholars. Similar to Glowacka, Szczepan highlights the often problematic proliferation of colonial terminology in descriptions of East-Central Europe within Holocaust Studies and public media on the topic of the Holocaust. Through her investigation of academic publications and documentary films, Szczepan shows how the "othering" language that predated Nazi Germany but was also circulated during the Third Reich continues to be applied by those investigating the Holocaust and thus feeds into a Western "colonial gaze" upon the territories. The contribution explores this challenging duality of Eastern European space as "imagined, projected, and conquered versus experienced, lived, and remembered."[60]

The EHS Roundtable Discussion "A European *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*? New Entanglements of Holocaust and Colonial Histories" reflects the volume's themes while also highlighting the significant academic,

60 Szczepan, "Terra Incognita?" 187.

public, and political issues of the debate, and the benefits of interdisciplinary approaches. As the participants, Edward Kissi, Tom Lawson, Ulrike Lindner, and Mirjam Zadoff discuss, education on and memorialization of the Holocaust can act as an aid to incorporating recognition of other genocides and instances of mass killing into the public sphere. However, at the same time, the prominence of the Holocaust within many states' historical narratives can serve as a political tool that obscures critical engagement with other elements of the past, such as the history of empire. The Roundtable shows that while progress has been made, Europe and the United States still have a way to go in terms of fully embracing diversity within academic institutions, educational systems, politics, and examinations of national identity and national history. Furthermore, it highlights the important and nuanced ways in which these debates and protests play out in former colonies in Africa.

In her Source Commentary, Elizabeth Harvey provides a unique perspective on the Nazi Empire from the point of view of Jews who hid in plain sight. Through the eyes of Jewish women who lived under the guise of being non-Jewish, we learn about the treatment of women who were forced into work for the Reich and found themselves at the mercy of *Organisation Todt.* This piece brings together the topic of what can be viewed as an imperial labor force and the Holocaust in a way that shows, again, how fruitful the colonial paradigm can be, even for furthering our understanding of Jewish experiences and illuminating the myriad of ways Jews fought to survive Nazi genocide. The project descriptions by Manuela Bauche and her colleagues, Robin Buller, Tom Menger, Roni Mikel-Arieli and Liane Schäfer, indicate the breadth of the current comparative research on the Second World War, the Holocaust, colonialism, and mass violence. They highlight the multiple approaches through which the entanglements between Holocaust and colonial histories, as well as wider frameworks of European violence, are being investigated.

Through these various contributions, this EHS volume highlights new academic research by both scholars of Holocaust and colonial histories. The volume equally shows how the questions raised about the Holocaust, genocide, and mass killing—colonial paradigms of violence—and their entanglements are not solely related to the past. The topic can undoubtedly be a charged one, and it should go without saying that this volume and its exchanges (intentionally) represent a range of varied opinions and approaches which are, of course, no indication of the individual outlook of the editors and the editorial board. However, although we may not agree on any *one* approach, we maintain that scholarly engagements with this topic are aimed at increasing historical knowledge and understand-

ing of the dynamics of mass violence in all its forms. Comparisons may not appeal to everyone, but scholars are making these connections in good faith; they are trying to illuminate otherwise hidden experiences of mass violence. The histories under examination here are connected in sometimes surprising ways and taking the Holocaust as a starting point to examine these histories has been an important development, allowing an illumination of the dynamics of mass violence in a range of contexts. Academic scholarship on these topics continues to expand in novel and exciting directions, but these discussions should not only be held amongst academics given the importance of these topics and of memory in today's world. Many of us are citizens who consciously or subconsciously live in postimperial, postcolonial or postgenocidal societies, as the descendants of colonial and imperial conquerors or as the descendants of their victims. Occasionally, we are simultaneously the descendants of both. Collective national memory of these violent events, memorialization of the victims, and awareness of the long-term impact of systems of racism, domination, and discrimination need visibility in the educational, public, and political sphere. As Mirjam Zadoff rightly highlights in this volume's Roundtable, "We cannot talk about history without taking into account its relevance for the present … Memory is always also about the present, about the political situation, and about society today."[61]

61 Zadoff, "A European *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*?" 227.